



# THE LAW OF KARMA

GL 203E



# THE LAW OF KAMMA

GL 203

Translated by

Dr. Anunya Methmanus

# Preface

The course material for the Law of Kamma (GL 203) aims to educate the student about the Law of Kamma, which forms the fundamental teachings in Buddhism. These teachings are like a roadmap which guides one to live one's life in such a way that one can bypass painful life experiences. The Law of Kamma or the Law of Action cannot be negotiated, changed or obliterated. Therefore, it behooves us to contemplate every single one of our actions and its respective consequences before we act on it regardless of how trivial the action may be. For this reason the Committee has compiled materials taken from the Tripitaka and other books written by experts in the field into this course material. The Committee is confident that after studying the course material, the student will have a deeper understanding about the Law of Kamma as taught in Buddhism and gain the roadmap to life. This roadmap is crucially important because in our daily life, there are so many decisions to make in regards to our action. A good decision is a result of careful consideration. This course aims to give the student the tool to make decisions which result from careful consideration. Hence, they are decisions which will affect his/her thoughts, words, and action in the present and help the student to live his/her life correctly and appropriately in this and the next existences.

This course material is a result of a team effort. Although the material has been checked and rechecked several times, mistakes may still be present. The Committee hopes that it will receive comments and feedback that will allow it to further improve on the course material.

The Committee

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# Course Syllabus

## 1. Description of the Course Material

GL 203: The Law of Kamma

It is the study of the Law of Kamma and its role in the round of rebirth or Samsara. It is the study of the Kamma Principle as taught in Buddhism. It is the study of the types of Kamma and the ways they give their consequences. It is the study of how to destroy evil. It is the study of the Law of Kamma with the aid of true stories which take place in the present. It is hoped that this course will allow the student to develop Right View and provide the map to guide him/her to live life to the best of his/her ability.

## 2. Course Objectives

1. To enable the student to learn and understand the Law of Kamma as taught in Buddhism.
2. To enable the student to know that all living beings within Samsara fall under the dictate of the Law of Kamma and to provide the student with a roadmap to guide him/her to live life in a worthwhile manner and in accordance with the truth.
3. To enable the student to learn through real life examples of individuals that have experienced the Law of Kamma first-hand.
4. To enable the student to perform only good deeds and abstain from misdeeds.

## 3. Topics Covered in the Course

1. Preliminary information about the Law of Kamma
2. The Kamma Principle as taught in Buddhism.
3. The first category of Kamma – Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of its duty.
4. The second category of Kamma – Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of its strength.
5. The third category of Kamma – Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of time.
6. The way Buddhism views the concept of washing away one's sins.
7. Case Studies in the Law of Kamma
8. Summary of the main points about the Law of Kamma and its relevance to other laws.

# Method of Study

## 1. Preparation for Self-Study

In order to achieve the objectives of the course, the student should follow the steps for studying each chapter as follows:

1. Spend an hour each day on the course material and finish each chapter within one to two weeks.
2. Begin each lesson with the pre-test to evaluate the student's prior comprehension of the subject material. Complete the exercises provided in each chapter. At the end of the chapter, the student should assess his/her comprehension of the material covered in the chapter by completing the test at the end of the chapter. The student should also write down the main points of the material covered.
3. Spend time on additional information through the Dhamma media provided through the Inner Dreams Kindergarten from 19.30 to 21.45 or by observing the manifestation of the Law of Karma through events that occur daily all around the student. The practice will allow the student to relate the theoretical part to the practical part of the course. It will also allow the student to gain a deeper understanding about the reality of life because the Law of Karma operates all the time and can be witnessed daily.

## 2. Self-Evaluation before and after the Chapter

The student should complete the pre-test before beginning each chapter in order to gauge his/her prior knowledge of the topic. The student can then pay special attention to what he has no knowledge of. The student should also complete the test at the end of each chapter. The student will then know how well he has learnt the subject matter, and whether he/she is ready to proceed to the next chapter. Whichever problem the student gets wrong, he/she should go back and review the relevant material. Self-evaluation will only be effective if it is carried out honestly.

## 3. The Text

Before beginning each chapter, the student should go over the layout of the chapter in terms of its topics, concepts, and objectives before proceeding with the detailed study.

The content of each chapter should be covered at the rate of one hour each day and aimed to finish within one to two weeks. Otherwise, there will not be enough time to complete the course. After having finished reading the entire chapter, the student should write down its main points and complete the exercises provided at the end of each chapter. The exercises will help the student to evaluate how well he/she comprehends the material covered.

#### **4. The Exercises**

The exercises are part of the overall evaluation. Therefore, the student should write down each main point of the chapter as the student proceeds with his/her study. All the exercises should be completed according to the time table. The student should not wait until the last minute to do the exercises all at once because such practice is missing the point. Moreover, the student will not be able to deliver his completed exercises on time and will be penalized. The penalty may cause the student to fail the course altogether.

#### **5. Long-Distance Learning via Satellite and Other Media**

The Foundation for the Study of the Dhamma for the Environment broadcasts its programs via satellite to present information which promotes the development of morality in both the theoretical and practical parts. One noteworthy program is called ‘The Inner Dreams Kindergarten’. This special program teaches the truth about the world and about life and presents the Law of Kamma using true stories in the format of case studies. Additional learning can be obtained through E-learning, which has been provided to facilitate learning anywhere in the world. The home page is <http://www.dou.us>

#### **6. Learning about the Law of Kamma via the Inner Dreams Kindergarten**

To further the student’s understanding of the Law of Kamma, the student is advised to learn about the Lord Buddha’s Teachings by watching the ‘Inner Dreams Kindergarten’ which is broadcasted via satellite every Monday to Saturday from 19.30 to 21.45 (Thai time). In the program, the student will learn about the Law of Kamma through real life stories. There are also reruns of the program as posted in the broadcasting schedule. The student can request the schedule from the DOU administration office.

#### **7. Examination**

The examination contains 100 multiple choices and is meant to evaluate how well the student comprehends the subject of the Law of Kamma. However, it is more important that the student understands the course material well enough to apply it to his/her daily life.



## CHAPTER 1

# FUNDAMENTAL UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE LAW OF KAMMA

### **Topics Covered in Chapter 1**

#### **1.1 The Round of Rebirth**

#### **1.2 The Law of Kamma as Taught in Buddhism**

- 1.2.1 The Discloser of the Reality of Kamma
- 1.2.2 Kamma and Its Consequences Are Unthinkable
- 1.2.3 Definitions of the Words ‘Right’, ‘Wrong’, ‘Good’, ‘Bad’, ‘Merit’, ‘Demerit’, ‘Advantage’, ‘Harm’, ‘Should’, and ‘Should not’
- 1.2.4 What Is the Law of Kamma?
- 1.2.5 The Rules Used to Decide What Is Good and Bad Kamma
- 1.2.6 Where Does Kamma Reside?
- 1.2.7 What Causes Kamma to Occur?
- 1.2.8 Characteristics of Kamma and Its Consequences
- 1.2.9 Types of Kamma
- 1.2.10 The Conduct Which Leads to the Extinguishment of Kamma

#### **1.3 The Law of Kamma as Taught in Different Religious Beliefs**

- 1.3.1 Natthikaditthi (the Belief in Nihilism)
- 1.3.2 Akiriyaditthi (the Belief That an Action Has No Consequences)
- 1.3.3 Ahetukaditthi (the Belief in Non-Causality)

#### **1.4 The Advantages Gained from Learning about the Law of Kamma**

## **Concepts**

1. The Law of Kamma is the law of action and its consequences. Kamma means an intentional action and can be divided into two types. These include good Kamma or actions which bring about happiness; and bad Kamma or actions which bring about suffering. This cause and effect relationship constitutes the Law of Kamma.
2. Throughout history, there have been thinkers and religious leaders who teach about the world, the universe, and life in many different ways and no common ground can be found. The reason is these individuals employ their thought process to theorize about what they can see all around them. However, Buddhism emphasizes the practical approach to the refinement of one's body, words, and thoughts to such an extent that emancipation can eventually be attained. When the moment of emancipation arrives, all the differences among the different schools of thought will disappear.
3. All beings have to undergo the round of rebirth in different planes of existence because we have been kept in fetters by our own Kamma, good or bad.
4. The way we live our lives is based on Kamma. Kamma is involved in everything around us. Any knowledge about Kamma helps us to think about everything which concerns us in such a way that we can abandon carelessness and endeavor to live life according to the truth.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand what action is considered good Kamma and what action is considered bad Kamma and to consciously choose to perform only good Kamma.
2. To enable the student to learn about the distorted view of the Law of Kamma as existed in different schools of thought.
3. To enable the student to realize the consequences of good and bad Kamma so that he/she can choose to abandon all bad Kamma.

# FUNDAMENTAL UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE LAW OF KAMMA

## 1.1 The Round of Rebirth

I search for the house builder but cannot find him, so I continue to undergo the round of rebirth not once but so often that I experience suffering. But look, there is the house builder. I have finally found him but he can no longer build houses because every single one of his ribs has been broken by me. The top of the house has been destroyed. My mind has attained the Truth, which is devoid of conditions because I have attained Nibbana.

This saying of the Lord Buddha affirms that by nature all beings once born must die. Death is unavoidable and all beings have undergone the round rebirth and death not just once but for countless times. Even the Lord Buddha, the Silent Buddha, and the Arahats, who possess supernormal powers and can rid themselves of all defilements, have had to undergo the round of rebirth for countless times before they can escape from it. During their last lifetime, they still have to experience the dictate of the Law of Kamma. Their enlightenment allows them to attain knowledge about the round of rebirth or Samsara as well as knowledge of those behind the scene who control and dictate all beings to undergo the ceaseless round of rebirth. Therefore, the round of rebirth or Samsara is not unlike a prison which keeps the prisoners, who have violated its law, locked up. Moreover, the prisoners are being constantly shuffled from one plane of existence to another depending on their overall Kamma at any particular time. The prisoners have absolutely no say in the matter. This endless cycle is called Samsara or the round of rebirth. Samsara is the prison where beings that still possess defilements are kept. These defilements cause their possessors to crave sensual pleasures and mistake all the meaningless things in life as something meaningful. These defilements also cause their possessors to be unable to differentiate right from wrong, good from bad, what is appropriate from what is inappropriate. Living beings lose their judgment because they are overpowered by the three families of defilements - greed, anger, and ignorance. These defilements cause their minds to be unwholesome and drive them to commit misdeeds through their body, words, and thoughts. These deeds in turn propel them to have to

undergo rebirth after they die, thus repeating the endless, vicious cycle which is the round of rebirth. It is like a homeowner who constantly has additions made to his home until it becomes a complicated maze. Therefore, the more good and bad Kamma one has accumulated, the more the consequences of the Kamma will be.

Given this scenario, it is now easy to understand the countless number of accumulated Kamma each individual possesses as a result of his countless lifetimes. Suppose in each lifetime, an individual accumulates both good and bad Kamma for a total of 1,000 times, when these Kamma give their consequences, the number of consequences can increase significantly compared to the original Kamma of 1,000. It is not unlike a single fruit tree which can yield thousands of fruits within its lifetime. Each one of us is trapped in a maze of accumulated Kamma which is waiting its turn to give its consequences one lifetime after another. Therefore, it is not possible for us to escape this round of rebirth as long as we are still lugging around with us all of these past accumulated Kamma, which are individually unique. It is also a universal fact that we reap what we sow.

The only way to find an escape from the round of rebirth during our human existence is when we are fortunate enough to have found the Lord Buddha's Teachings, to study them and practice them diligently until we can attain the Fruit of Nibbana as in the case of Phra Ongulimala. He was able to realize the Dhamma and rid himself of all defilements after having listened only once to the Lord Buddha's teaching. As a result, he no longer had to undergo the round of rebirth. Had he not done so and had to continue to be reborn for countless more times, he would have to first serve a long sentence in the Hell Realm for having killed so many people. Within the round of rebirth he would have most certainly continued to accumulate more and more Kamma and set off a chain reaction not unlike that during the nuclear fusion of an atomic bomb.

The belief about this plane of existence and the next plane of existence, and about life in the hereafter; the belief that death is not annihilation but that death leads to rebirth; these beliefs are key to how we will live this life and how it will impact our next and future existences. One's beliefs determine if one will have a life of mostly happiness or suffering. The reason is our beliefs influence our deeds and our deeds determine our lives. All beings are conditioned by their overall Kamma. We reap what we sow. If we do good deeds, we receive happiness as their consequences. If we commit bad deeds, we receive suffering as their consequences.

The term '**Samsara**' was coined in order to make it easier for people of recent times to understand its meaning. **Samsara means a journey, a recycling.** It essentially implies **a long journey, a continuous recycling or round of rebirth from one plane of existence to another until such time as all defilements can be extinguished.** For example, one is a human being in this lifetime and after one dies one is reborn in the States of Happiness. After one ceases to be in the States of Happiness, one will be reborn again. One may be reborn in the Human Realm or may even be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. This recycling is called the round of rebirth and it occurs continuously and is highly undesirable. The Lord Buddha said, "**All beings undergo the round of rebirth and cannot escape from the clutch of suffering and are plagued by suffering.**"

The Buddhist Scriptures mention the word **‘living beings’** very often. According to the Lord Buddha, **living beings imply those that are still attached to the Five Aggregates, which include corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness.** Living beings possess a body and a consciousness and include human beings, celestial beings, Brahma beings, Mara beings, Petas, Asurakayas, animals, and hell beings. All these beings are grouped together as living beings of the worlds.

The beginning, the middle and the end of the round of rebirth cannot be determined but as long as living beings still possess defilements, the round of rebirth must continue. Human beings of this age have been investigating space outside of earth by various means such as space travels. The curiosity about what lies beyond earth is not new. During the Lord Gautama Buddha’s time, such curiosity also existed as in the case of the gentleman celestial being by the name of ‘Rohitassa’. Before being reborn a celestial being, he was a Yogi possessing supernormal powers. As a Yogi, he had tried to search for the end of the worlds for a total period of 100 years without stopping to eat, drink, urinate or defecate. In spite of the fact that he could within one step cover the distance which spanned an entire ocean, he was still unable to reach the end of the worlds because his life came to an end first. ‘Rohitassa’ asked the Lord Buddha how one could end birth, aging, illnesses, death, and rebirth and whether one could reach the end of the worlds by traveling.

The Lord Buddha then gave an analogy which compared the length of the round of rebirth to everyday phenomenon as follows:

**The First Analogy:** A man cuts all the grass, all the branches, all the stems, all the leaves which appear on earth, and binds them together in bundles each is four inches long. Suppose one bundle represents his mother, another bundle represents his mother’s mother, and on and on until the last bundle is accounted for, even then he still has not reached the end of the lineage.

**The Second Analogy:** A man makes the tiniest clumps of dirt out of all the soil on earth. Suppose each clump represents his father, and the next clump represents his father’s father, and on and on until the last clump is accounted for and still he has not reached the end of the lineage.

**The Third Analogy:** The tears which an individual has shed during all of his human existences to grieve the death of his mother, the death of his father, the death of his siblings, the death of his children, the death of his relatives, the loss of his wealth, the pain of his illnesses, are greater than the water in the four great oceans.

**The Fourth Analogy:** The amount of milk which an individual has drunk from his mother’s breasts throughout all of his human existences is more than the water in the four great oceans.

**The Fifth Analogy:** A solid mountain which spans 16 kilometers in all three dimensions. Every 100 years, a man takes a very fine cloth and smoothes over the entire surface of the mountain. The length of time it takes for the mountain to be leveled to the ground by such means is actually shorter than one Kappa.<sup>1</sup>

**The Sixth Analogy:** An area is confined by walls which span 16 kilometers in all three dimensions. The area is then filled with lettuce seeds. Every 100 years, a man removes just one seed. The length of time it takes for the seeds to be removed completely is actually shorter than one Kappa.

**The Seventh Analogy:** There are four Buddhist monks, each monk lives to be 100 years old. Suppose each of the four monks can recall his past existences at a rate of 100,000 Kappas a day and continues to do so for the rest of his life, all four monks combined still cannot recall all of each monk's past existences.

**The Eighth Analogy:** The number of all the Kappas which have gone past exceeds the number of the grains of sand in the entire length of the Ganges.

**The Ninth Analogy:** A man throws a stick up into the air, sometimes it falls on one end, sometimes it falls on the other end, sometimes it falls on its side. In the same manner, the round of rebirth is just as uncertain. Sometimes, a being is reborn as a human being, sometimes as an animal, etc.

**The Tenth Analogy:** After a living being has undergone the round of rebirth for an entire Kappa, his bones will have piled as high as 'Mount Vepulla'.

**The Eleventh Analogy:** After a living being undergoes the round of rebirth for an entire Kappa as a human being or as an animal, the amount of blood which flows out as a result of decapitation is greater than all the water in the four great oceans.

**The Twelfth Analogy:** It is very difficult to find a living being that has never been born as someone's mother. We have been born countless of times. We have taken on all the roles that there ever are.

**The Thirteenth Analogy:** It is very difficult to find a living being that has never been born as someone's father.

**The Fourteenth Analogy:** It is very difficult to find a living being that has never been born as someone's brother.

**The Fifteenth Analogy:** It is very difficult to find a living being that has never been born as someone's sister.

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<sup>1</sup> One Kappa is the length of time it takes for the earth to reform, exist, be destroyed, and become complete emptiness.

**The Sixteenth Analogy:** It is very difficult to find a living being that has never been born as someone's son.

**The Seventeenth Analogy:** It is very difficult to find a living being that has never been born as someone's daughter.

These analogies given by the Lord Buddha indicate that there are certain phenomena which activate and perpetuate the process of the round of rebirth and these include:

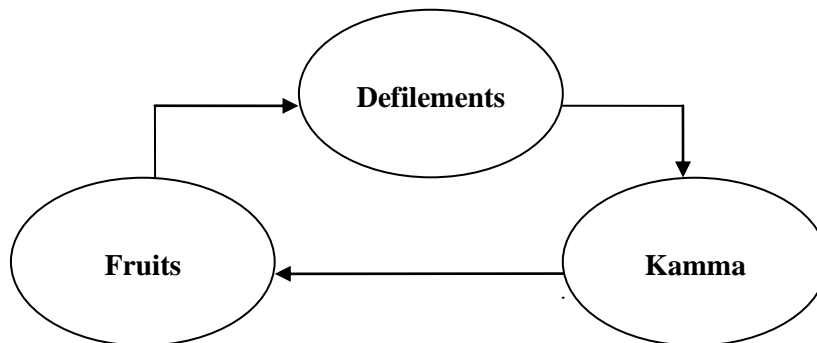
**Defilements** or gloominess means evil which lies latent in our consciousness. It causes our mind to become clouded and impure. Under the dictate of defilements, a living being cannot be itself but is forced by its defilements to perform all kinds of deeds. There are two key drivers in this process. The first one is '**Kileskam**'. It means the latent evil which forces one to commit certain wrongs in order to obtain the objects of one's desire. The second key driver is '**Vatthukam**'. It means desirable objects which include matter, sound, smell, taste and touch.

**Kamma** or deeds: They include physical, verbal, and mental deeds and can be either good or bad.

**Fruits** or consequences: They mean the consequences of Kamma.

Defilements, Kamma and the consequences of Kamma are sometimes referred to as the three causes of the round of rebirth or '**Trivatta**'. Phra Ongulimala had the following to say about 'Trivatta': "When I was a murderer and was dominated by defilements, I committed many atrocious acts of brutality, the consequences of which will be a very long existence in the States of Unhappiness. But because of the Lord Buddha's Teachings, I have been able to rid myself of all defilements and become emancipated from the round of rebirth. I will no longer undergo any more birth and death." This statement demonstrates clearly how defilements drive one to perform physical, verbal, and mental misdeeds. Once a deed is done, however great or small, there naturally follows its consequences.

### The 'Trivatta' Diagram



According to the Lord Buddha's Teachings, rebirth can assume four different modes depending on the living being's overall Kamma, which dictates if it will assume a low, inferior birth mode or a refined, superior birth mode. These four birth modes include:

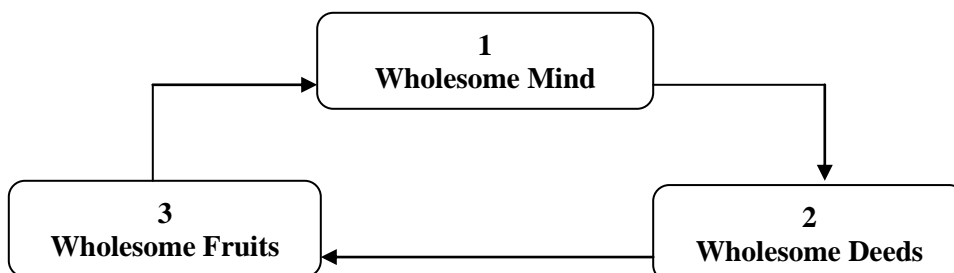
1. **Jalabuja:** Being born from the womb.
2. **Andaja:** Being born from the egg.
3. **Sansedaja:** Being born from moisture.
4. **Opapatika:** Spontaneous rising into an adult form.

During a human being's lifetime, he/she performs many, many deeds. Some are good and others are bad. When he/she dies, there are different planes of existence where he/she will be reborn into. The planes of existence can be grouped into two major destinations as follows:

1. **The States of Happiness:** Individuals, who have performed good deeds, will meet with happiness in both this and the next existence. Individuals destined for the States of Happiness must possess 'Right View'. That is, they have right understanding about the Law of Kamma. They are noble-minded and have performed mostly wholesome deeds through their body, words, and thoughts. When they die, the fruits of their wholesome deeds will cause them to be reborn in the States of Happiness, which include the Human Realm, the Celestial Realm, etc. These realms are still dominated by defilements and they may still be tempted to commit a misdeed. However, if they can completely extinguish their defilements, then they can attain Nibbana and will no longer have to undergo the round of rebirth within the Three Spheres of existence. These include the Sense Sphere, the Form Sphere, and the Non-Form Sphere. Defilements no longer have any power over them, and the rest of their overall Kamma will no longer have the chance to bear its fruits.

The Lord Buddha taught that rebirth in the States of Happiness is very rare. Of all the dirt in the landmasses, the dirt in the fingernail represents the number of beings that are reborn as human beings but the rest of the dirt represents the number of beings that are reborn in the States of Loss and Woe. Also, the number of current human beings and celestial beings who will be reborn as a human being or a celestial being is like dirt in a fingernail but the number of human beings and celestial beings who will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe is like the rest of the dirt on earth.

### The 'Trivatta' Diagram of Right View Individuals

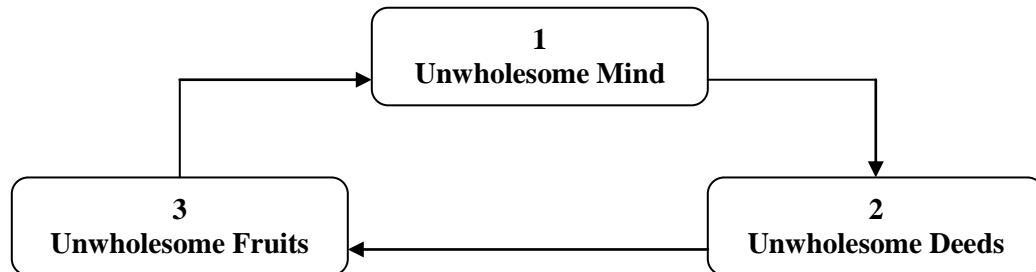




- 2. The States of Unhappiness:** Individuals who have committed unwholesome deeds will meet with suffering and difficulties in both this and the next existences. Individuals destined for the States of Unhappiness are those who possess ‘Wrong View’. That is, they have wrong understanding about the Law of Kamma. They are driven by base motives to commit unwholesome deeds through their body, words, and thoughts. When they die, the fruits of their unwholesome deeds will cause them to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. The four States of Loss and Woe include the Hell Realm, the Peta Realm, the Asurakaya Realm, and the Animal Realm. These are the planes of existence where the inhabitants experience the horrible consequences of their unwholesome deeds. Inhabitants of these realms are considered to be unfortunate, since they cannot realize any stages of the Dhamma. They cannot realize the Four Noble Truths, which include suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

According to the Lord Buddha, once a being is reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, it is very difficult for it to be reborn a human being. Having a rebirth as a human being is as difficult as a blind turtle which comes up to the surface of the ocean once every 100 years and gets its neck caught in a noose the size of its head, which just happens to be floating around in the vast ocean.

### The ‘Trivatta’ Diagram of Wrong View Individuals



From the time the Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment to the time He attained the complete Nibbana, which spanned a period of 45 years, he had shown incomparable kindness to all humanity by being our virtuous friend and by teaching us the ultimate goal in life. A large number of living beings had come to listen to the Dhamma lectures from the Lord Buddha. They not only listened to the Dhamma lectures but listened to it attentively and practiced the Dhamma in their lives. As a result, there were a large number of beings that were able to witness the Lord Buddha’s Enlightenment as they attained the different stages of holiness. As a result, they could cut short their round of rebirth and minimize the distance toward Nibbana. These different stages of holiness are as follows:

**Sotapannas or Stream Enterers:** These are individuals that have attained the first stage of holiness. There are two levels of Sotapannas and they will undergo from one to seven rebirths in the Human Realm before they attain enlightenment. These individuals can abandon the Three Lower Fetters, which include Sakkayaditthi (Belief in a personal self), Vicikiccha (Skepticism), and Silabbataparamasa (Clinging to rules and rituals).

**Sakadagamis or Once Returners:** These are individuals that have attained the second stage of holiness. They have to undergo only one more rebirth in the Human Realm before they attain enlightenment. These individuals have abandoned the Three Lower Fetters altogether and lightened the grip of greed, anger, and ignorance.

**Anagamis or Non-Returners:** There are five levels of Anagamis. These individuals will never be reborn in the Human Realm again. They can abandon the Five Lower Fetters as well the Two Higher Fetters, which include Kamaraga (Sensual lust) and Patigha (Ill-will). After these individuals die, they will be reborn in the parts of the Brahma Realm called Suddhavas and will attain enlightenment from there.

**Arahats:** These individuals have attained the highest stage of holiness. Their round of rebirth has ended. Their accumulated Kamma will no longer have any chance to send forth its fruits. Defilements can no longer have any power over them because they have already attained enlightenment and Nibbana.

The round of rebirth is a universal phenomenon and concerns every human being regardless of his/her race and creed. It is a fact of life about which everyone must know. Ignorance of the round of rebirth is dangerous and can jeopardize one's life by causing one to fall prey to the dictate of one's defilements. Right understanding about the round of rebirth can lead one to wish for the way out of suffering. The Human Realm is a plane of existence where Kamma can be accumulated to the fullest be it good or bad. The Human Realm is like the center of all good and bad Kamma. The physical form of a human being is robust and strong. It is conducive to the accumulation of Kamma, which in turn propels one along the long journey within Samsara. If good Kamma is accumulated, it will lead one to a long life of blissful enjoyment in the States of Happiness until such time as the accumulated merit is spent. Therefore, merit is a commodity which needs constant replenishing. If bad Kamma is accumulated, it will lead to a long life of suffering in the States of Unhappiness until the ill consequences are spent provided that bad Kamma is not being further accumulated.

## 1.2 The Law of Kamma as Taught in Buddhism

### 1.2.1 The Discloser of the Reality of Kamma

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that the Lord Buddha remarked that He had discovered and seen the common and true enemy of all living beings. This common enemy is the evil force behind the scene which uses defilements to control all living beings. Defilements cause human beings to perform deeds or Kamma, the fruits of which cause them to undergo the round of rebirth. The Lord Buddha was able to witness the round of rebirth on the day of His Enlightenment after he had attained the Threefold Knowledge.

**During the first watch, the Lord Buddha attains the First Knowledge, which is called Pubbenivasanussatinana.** It is the supernormal knowledge which enables the Lord Buddha to recall the details of His countless past existences. The First Knowledge is accessible through the Dhamma-Eye. He is able to witness His countless past existences and the conditions of each of these existences ranging from abject poverty to the wealth and power of an absolute monarch. The bones accumulated from all of His countless existences as a human being pile higher than a great mountain. The blood or tears which He had shed in all these existences were greater than the great ocean.

**During the second watch, the Lord Buddha attains the Second Knowledge, which is called Cutupapatanana.** It is the supernormal knowledge which enables the Lord Buddha to perceive the death and rebirth of other beings through the Dhamma-Eye. The Lord Buddha perceives that each living being's round of rebirth is caused by its overall Kamma. Some are born as animals, Petas, or Asurakayas that lead a life of suffering. Others are born as human beings or celestial beings that are blessed with good looks and lead a life of luxury. This is where the Lord Buddha perceives how each being's unique, overall Kamma causes each being to be uniquely different.

**During the last watch, the Lord Buddha attains the Third Knowledge, which is called Asavakkhayanana.** It is the supernormal knowledge which enables the Lord Buddha to rid Himself of all defilements and become enlightened as the Lord Buddha. He is the fourth Buddha of this Kappa. The Lord Buddha is omniscient and is the refuge of all living beings. After His Enlightenment and with the deepest compassion for all beings, the Lord Buddha has revealed to us that the hereafter exists and that it is our overall Kamma which determines our rebirth in the Hell Realm or in the Celestial Realm. He has told us what Kamma causes us to be reborn in the Hell Realm and what Kamma causes us to be reborn in the Celestial Realm. The Lord Buddha has graciously taught us the whole truth about reality. He had spent the entire twenty Asankheyyas and 100,000 Kappas pursuing His Perfections in order to become enlightened as a Buddha and to lead other beings out of the round of rebirth.

In the old days, the night was divided into three periods; each period lasted four hours as follows:

The first watch is between 18:00 - 22:00.

The second watch is between 22:00 – 02:00.

The third watch is between 02:00 – 06:00.

### **1.2.2 Kamma and Its Consequences Are Unthinkable**

Kamma and its consequences are unthinkable and cannot be explained using human intellect alone. The reason is the Law of Kamma is highly complex and cannot be directly witnessed by the human eye or understood by postulating or theorizing. The workings of the Law of Kamma can only be witnessed using the Dhamma-Eye. The Dhamma-Eye allows one to perceive clearly the past (Atitansanana), the present (Paccupapannansanana), the future (Anagatansanana), and how each living being is propelled along by its overall Kamma (Yathakammupaganana). These supernormal knowledges are specifically the Lord Buddha's domain. The Lord Buddha had this to say about the Law of Kamma: "The fruits of Kamma are unthinkable. Anyone who tries to think about them risk going insane and suffer unnecessary hardship."

### **1.2.3 Definitions of the Words 'Right', 'Wrong', 'Good', 'Bad', 'Merit', 'Demerit', 'Advantage', 'Harm', 'Should', and 'Should not'**

We study the Law of Kamma so that we can understand it, so that we can live our lives accordingly. Our daily life requires us to make many decisions and we must make them knowledgeably in regards to the Law of Kamma. There are important words in Buddhism which have a direct link to the Law of Kamma and it behooves us to learn them well so that we can make our decisions wisely. These important words include:

- 1. 'Right':** It means an act which once it is carried out has a beneficial effect. It does not cause any damage, any harm, or any trouble for oneself and for all concerned.
- 2. 'Wrong':** It means an act of carelessness or heedlessness that causes damage, harm, and trouble for oneself and for all concerned because it is an act of stupidity.
- 3. 'Good':** It is an action which is taken because one is well aware that it is the right thing to do and one does it with attentiveness, carefulness, and confidence. The fruits of such deeds bring about happiness and merit.
- 4. 'Bad':** It is an action which is carried out with the full knowledge that it is wrong, that it will cause damage and trouble for oneself and for all concerned. The fruit of such action is suffering, trouble, and retribution.

5. **‘Merit’**: It means radiance, purity, goodness, things that cleanse one’s body, words, and thoughts from evil. Merit leads to happiness as taught by the Lord Buddha: “Behold, monks, don’t be afraid of merit, for merit is the name of happiness.” Merit is made when one acts wholesomely through one’s body, words, and thoughts. Merit-making is an act performed by high-minded individuals.
6. **‘Demerit’**: It means gloominess, wickedness, and filth which corrupt the body, the words, and the thoughts. Its fruit is suffering, grief, and trouble. Unwholesome deeds through one’s body, words, and thoughts give rise to demerit. Unwholesome deeds are committed by corrupted individuals.
7. **‘Advantage’**: It means the result of a wholesome deed in terms of praise and admiration.
8. **‘Harm’**: It means the result of an unwholesome deed in terms of reproof and censure.
9. **‘Should’**: It means knowing what should be done. That is, if what one wants to do is not wrong, does not cause any damage but on the contrary is good and decent, one does it attentively and wholeheartedly.
10. **‘Should not’**: It means knowing what should not be done. That is, if what one wants to do is not wrong and does not cause any damage but may be offensive and provoke reproof, then one chooses not to do it.

These words and their definitions should help the student to better decide what to think, say and do because what he/she does affects his/her life, community, and the environment.

#### 1.2.4 What Is the Law of Kamma?

The Law of Kamma is the law of action, the law of cause and effect. It is the law of nature. Nature in this case is defined by the fact that a wholesome thought results in a wholesome deed and an unwholesome thought results in an unwholesome deed. The Law of Kamma is very real and very relevant to life in that a particular cause leads to a particular effect. Kamma encompasses physical, verbal, and mental deeds regardless of whether they are good or bad, intentional or unintentional, frequent or infrequent. Every deed yields its consequences. Some of the consequences may be experienced right here and now. Others are experienced in the hereafter. The Law of Kamma is absolutely exact and no one is exempted from it. It governs human beings of every race, creed, and language regardless of where they are: on land, on the water, in the air, on the moon, in space. No one can escape from the Law of Kamma. Even our current Lord Buddha had to live with the consequences of His past Kamma which had been accumulated during His pursuit of Perfections throughout countless lifetimes. Our Kamma follows us everywhere like a shadow. The rules and laws thought up by human beings contain loopholes and may change from year to year but the Law of Kamma never changes and contains no loopholes. According to the Law of Kamma, it stands that a good deed yields

good consequences and a wicked deed yields ill consequences. Ultimately, there is no such thing as a good deed yielding ill consequences and a bad deed yielding good consequences.

Therefore, it behooves everyone to learn about the Law of Kamma. Ignorance of this law is very dangerous. The knowledge of this law can at least help one to conduct one's life in a safe manner and to ensure a safe journey within the round of rebirth such that one will be reborn only in the Human Realm and the Celestial Realm so that one can continue to accumulate more and more merit. A true understanding of the Law of Kamma motivates one to make more merit than mistakes and any mistake made will be minor and infrequent. One will also be equipped to not only deal with one's death but to also prepare for it in a knowledgeable manner and in accordance with the Lord Buddha's Teachings:

Citte sankiliththe dugati patikankha

Citte asankiliththe sugati patikankha

When the mind is gloomy, the States of Unhappiness can be expected.

When the mind is not gloomy, The States of Happiness can be expected.

In other words, one's hereafter is decided upon by the state of one's mind just before one's death. If one's mind is clear and bright, one will be reborn in the States of Happiness but if one's mind is gloomy, one will be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. The mind is gloomy as a result of all the unwholesome deeds which one has committed. Therefore, it is important to know what is considered wholesome and unwholesome. In terms of what is wholesome, we must look at individuals, who have been able to rid themselves of all defilements, as our role models. We must learn from their examples and from their teachings. To put it in a nutshell, these holy individuals perform only wholesome deeds which give rise to merit. Once merit is made, unwholesome deeds can be abandoned altogether because merit can refine one's mind and make it clear and bright. Therefore, if we desire a particular effect we must start with the corresponding cause. In the hereafter, there is no such thing as earning a living. Life in the hereafter is conditioned by either merit or demerit and has nothing to do with who and what one used to be on earth.

The word Kamma has its root in the Pali language and has a neutral meaning. It means action or deed. To decide if an action or deed qualifies as Kamma and which side it belongs to, we have to look at the intention. Therefore, Kamma means an intentional action and can be performed in three ways: through the body, the words, and the thoughts. Kamma or an intentional action can be categorized in two ways as follows:

1. **Wholesome Kamma:** It means a good deed which gives rise to merit. The deed is not morally wrong. It is not unethical. It does not cause the mind to be gloomy. It can also be referred to as a wholesome intention, since one intentionally performs a good deed. Wholesome Kamma can be defined by the ‘Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action’ and involves physical, verbal, and mental deeds as follows:
  - **Physical Deeds:** These are wholesome deeds which are performed through the body and can also be referred to as physical honesty and include:
    1. **Panatipata Veramani:** To abstain from taking the life of another living being.
    2. **Adinnadana Veramani:** To abstain from stealing.
    3. **Kamesumicchacara Veramani:** To abstain from sexual misconduct.
  - **Verbal Deeds:** These are wholesome deeds which are performed through the words and can be referred to as verbal honesty and include:
    1. **Musavada Veramani:** To abstain from false speech such as lying, words designed to deceive or take advantage of others, etc.
    2. **Pisunaya-vacaya Veramani:** To abstain from divisive speech or words which cause division among people. They include sarcastic words, insulting words, gossip, etc. They also include words which are used to quarrel with each other.
    3. **Pharusaya-vacaya Veramani:** To abstain from offensive language which includes words that sting, embarrass, and anger others and all swear words.
    4. **Samphappalapa Veramani:** To abstain from nonsensical speech or words which are uttered at the wrong time, words which are meant to tease one another, words which are unbeneficial, words which are unjust, words which lack concrete evidence, etc.
  - **Mental Deeds:** They mean wholesome thoughts and can be referred to as mental honesty and include:
    1. **Anabhijja:** Non-covetousness.
    2. **Abyapada:** Not thinking about harming or exploiting others.
    3. **Sammaditthi:** Having ‘Right View’.

When someone made a mistake or used to do something wrong such as drinking alcohol, after he realizes the harm of the habit, he absolutely refuses to drink it ever again. This person is said to **abstain** from alcohol. When someone has never done

something and refuses to ever do it because he realizes its harm such as drinking alcohol, he is said to **refrain** from drinking alcohol.

**2. Unwholesome Kamma:** It means a bad deed. The deed is morally wrong and unethical. Once committed, it incurs retribution and causes the mind to be gloomy. It can also be referred to as an unwholesome intention, since one intentionally performs a bad deed. Unwholesome Kamma can be defined by the ‘Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action’ and involves physical, verbal, and mental misdeeds as follows:

- **Physical Deeds:** These are unwholesome deeds which are performed by the body and can also be referred to as physical dishonesty and include:

- 1. **Panatipata:** To intentionally take the life of another living being.

- 2. **Adinnadana:** To intentionally steal from others.

- 3. **Kamesumicchacara:** To intentionally commit sexual misconduct.

- **Verbal Deeds:** These are unwholesome deeds which are performed through the words and can be referred to as verbal dishonesty and include:

- 1. **Musavada:** To intentionally practice false speech such as lying, words designed to deceive or take advantage of others, etc.

- 2. **Pisunavaca:** To intentionally practice divisive speech or words which cause division among people. They include sarcastic words, insulting words, gossip, etc. They include words which are used to quarrel with each other.

- 3. **Pharusavaca:** To intentionally practice offensive language and include words which sting, embarrass, and anger others and all swear words.

- 4. **Samphappalapa:** To intentionally practice nonsensical speech or words which are uttered at the wrong time, words which are meant to tease one another, words which are unbeneficial, words which are unjust, words which lack concrete evidence, etc.

- **Mental Deeds:** These are unwholesome thoughts and can be referred to as mental dishonesty and include:

- 1. **Abhijja:** Covetousness.

- 2. **Byapada:** Thinking about harming or exploiting others.

- 3. **Micchaditthi:** Having ‘Wrong View’.



## Comparison of the Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action to the Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action and the Vehicle for Kamma

The Vehicle for Kamma	The Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action	The Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action
Physical Deeds	1. To abstain from taking the life of another living being.	1. To intentionally take the life of another living being.
	2. To abstain from stealing.	2. To intentionally steal from others.
	3. To abstain from sexual misconduct.	3. To intentionally commit sexual misconduct.
Verbal Deeds	1. To abstain from false speech.	1. To intentionally practice false speech.
	2. To abstain from divisive speech.	2. To intentionally practice divisive speech.
	3. To abstain from offensive language.	3. To intentionally practice offensive language.
	4. To abstain from nonsensical speech.	4. To intentionally practice nonsensical speech.
Mental Deeds	1. Non-Covetousness.	1. Covetousness.
	2. Not thinking about harming or exploiting others.	2. Thinking about harming or exploiting others.
	3. To have Right View.	3. To have Wrong View.

In Buddhism, the Law of Kamma is also referred to as the **definitiveness of Kamma**. It speaks of the certainty of Kamma in that Kamma or an intentional act must be followed by its consequence. The Lord Buddha had the following to say about the Law of Kamma: **“All beings possess their own Kamma, are heirs to their own Kamma. Their Kamma define their rebirth, their race, their refuge. Kamma differentiates beings into crudeness and refinement.”** A good deed gives rise to merit. Accumulated merit is in turn concentrated into Perfections and Perfections cause the individual’s body, words, and thoughts to become purer and brighter. On the contrary, a bad deed gives rise to retribution. The ill consequences of repeated misdeeds make one’s defilements more potent.

Therefore, it can be said that the root cause of human misbehavior, the root cause of social problems, and **the root cause of economical problems comes from the lack of understanding about the reality of our existence and of our world.** This lack of understanding causes us to behave immorally and unethically. It causes us to overlook the fact that all of us share the same

fate in that all of us experience suffering in the forms of rebirth, aging, the pain of illnesses, and death. All of us share the same common enemy which is our defilements. All of us share the same ultimate goal, which is to extinguish all of our defilements. We must study about the Law of Kamma and understand that our life is the complex manifestation of the consequences of our overall past and present Kamma.

### **1.2.5 The Rules Used to Decide What Is Good and Bad Kamma**

As mentioned earlier, Kamma is an intentional act which can be performed through the body, words, and thoughts. There are two main types of Kamma: wholesome Kamma and unwholesome Kamma. What decides if a Kamma is wholesome or unwholesome is its consequences.

- 1. Consider the Final Consequences of an Action:** The Lord Buddha taught that “Once an individual performs an action and does not suffer any negative consequences but feels cheerful and joyful about it, then the action is considered a good Kamma. Once an individual performs an action and suffers its negative consequences in the forms of tears and sorrow, then the action is considered a bad Kamma.”
- 2. Consider the Cause of the Action:** The Lord Buddha taught that “An action which is devoid of greed, anger, and ignorance is considered a wholesome Kamma. It causes no harm. It has positive consequences. An action which is performed under the influence of greed, anger, and ignorance is considered an unwholesome Kamma. It has harmful consequences. It causes suffering.”

### **1.2.6 Where Does Kamma Reside?**

The Lord Buddha said, “Whatever an individual sows, so will he reap. An individual that performs a good deed will receive positive consequences. An individual that performs a bad deed will receive ill consequences.” One may wonder what happens to all the countless number of good and bad deeds which have ever been performed. All living beings are made up of the physical form and the consciousness or the soul. The physical form performs different deeds through the body, the words, and the thoughts. All of the performed deeds are then stored in the consciousness or the soul. By nature, our consciousness is pure and bright. It performs the duty of storing all of the physical, verbal, and mental deeds which each human being has ever performed throughout his/her countless existences and transforms them into consequences according to the Law of Kamma. The consequences may show up in this, in the next, and/or in future existences. Our deeds are like a shadow which follows us everywhere.

### 1.2.7 What Causes Kamma to Occur?

Samsara or the round of rebirth is perpetuated by the defilements which are inherent in all living beings. Defilements play a role in all of our action be it wholesome or unwholesome. The causes of bad and good Kamma are as follows:

#### 1. The Causes of Bad Kamma

**Lobha or Greed** : Covetousness.

**Dosa or Anger** : The desire to harm others and is expressed as ill-will, anger, irritation, annoyance, frustration, grudges.

**Moha or Ignorance** : Misguidedness – mistaking something wrong as being right, harboring a grudge.

#### 2. The Causes of Good Kamma

**Alobha** : Non-covetousness.

**Adosa** : Not desiring to harm others. The absence of ill-will, anger, irritation, annoyance, frustration, grudges.

**Amoha** : No misguidedness. One has Right View, one does not hold a grudge against anyone.

The Lord Buddha taught all living beings to know the root causes of Kamma so that Kamma can be extinguished at its source. The Lord Buddha taught us to cure our greed by giving alms; to cure our anger by cultivating loving-kindness and observing the Precepts; to cure our ignorance by practicing analytical reflection of the causes and effects, by practicing creative thinking, by right thinking so that our greed, anger, and ignorance can be reduced; by being motivated to perform good deeds and practice meditation. These practices allow the source of unwholesomeness to be destroyed.

### 1.2.8 Characteristics of Kamma and Its Consequences

According to the Lord Buddha, Kamma has four characteristics as well as four types of consequences as follows:

- 1. Black Kamma and Black Consequences:** This is the situation where an individual intentionally commits unwholesome Kamma through the body, the words, and the thoughts. The consequences of which is a rebirth in the States of Unhappiness where the individual experiences pure suffering. The majority of individuals in this category are reborn as hell beings.
- 2. White Kamma and White Consequences:** This is the situation where an individual intentionally performs wholesome Kamma through the body, the words, and the thoughts. The consequences of which is a rebirth in the States of Happiness where the individual experiences pure ecstasy. The majority of individuals in this category are reborn as Brahma beings.
- 3. Black and White Kamma with Black and White Consequences:** An individual intentionally performs a mixture of wholesome and unwholesome Kamma, the results of which are the vicissitudes of life. When wholesome Kamma yields its fruits, the individual will be reborn in the States of Happiness. Likewise, when unwholesome Kamma yields its fruits, the individual will be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. Individuals in this category are reborn as human beings, some types of celestial beings, animals, etc.
- 4. Neither Black nor White Kamma with neither Black nor White Consequences:** This category applies to Arahats who have risen above all conditions which give rise to wholesome and unwholesome deeds as well as merit and demerit. They are destined for Nibbana only.

It can be seen that the type of Kamma affects the characteristics of the consciousness in that a wholesome deed leads to a clear and bright mind. Therefore, a wholesome deed can be compared to white Kamma because it makes the consciousness clean and white. On the contrary, an unwholesome deed makes the mind sad and gloomy. An unwholesome deed can be compared to black Kamma because it makes the consciousness dark and black. Black Kamma gives rise to demerit and causes the individual to be reborn in the Hell Realm. White Kamma gives rise to merit and causes the individual to be reborn in the Celestial Realm. A mixture of white and black Kamma gives rise to a mixture of merit and demerit and causes the individual to be reborn as a human being, a celestial being, or an animal. Individuals that rise above both merit and demerit can attain Nibbana and will never undergo the round of rebirth again.

### 1.2.9 Types of Kamma

The overall image of Kamma has evolved throughout the ages and has been a popular topic of discussion. However, the knowledge of Kamma has its origin and its continuation in Buddhism and can be divided into two periods as follows:

**During the Time of the Lord Buddha:** The Lord Buddha's Teachings provide the origin of the knowledge of Kamma. According to the Tripitaka, the Lord Buddha characterized Kamma according to the timeframe in which its consequences show up and this timeframe can be divided into three periods as follows:

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Period: Ditthadhammavedaniyakamma - Kamma** which gives its consequences in the current existence as a human being, a celestial being, an animal, a Peta, an Asurakaya, etc. Kamma which has immediate effects can be seen in the examples where a criminal is caught dead or a bee which dies immediately after it stings another being. This type of Kamma gives its consequences right now in this existence and continues on into future existences.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Period: Upapajjavedaniyakamma – Kamma** which gives its consequences in the next existence. For example, if an individual performs this type of Kamma as a human being, after he/she dies, he/she is reborn as a celestial being. It is during his/her existence as a celestial being that this type of Kamma will give its effect.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Period: Aparapariyavedaniyakamma – Kamma** which gives its consequences in future existences and will stop only after the individual is freed from all defilements.

**After the Time of the Lord Buddha:** After the Lord Buddha has attained the complete Nibbana, the knowledge has been passed down by Buddhist monks who studied and gained a thorough understanding of the Lord Buddha's Teachings. These sagacious heirs of Buddhism extended the knowledge of Kamma and its consequences into 12 categories as follows:

1. Ditthadhammavedaniyakamma: Kamma which gives its consequences in the current existence.
2. Upapajjavedaniyakamma: Kamma which gives its consequences in the next existence.
3. Aparapariyavedaniyakamma: Kamma which gives its consequences in future existences.

4. Ahosikamma: Kamma which is nullified. Both good and bad Kamma no longer give their consequences.
5. Garukakamma: Weighty Kamma. It can be either good or bad.
6. Bahulakamma or Acinnakamma: Habitual Kamma. It can be either good or bad.
7. Yadasannakamma: Good or bad Kamma which is recalled near the time of death.
8. Katattavapanakamma: Good or bad Kamma which occurs unintentionally.
9. Janakakamma: Good or bad Kamma which dictates one's rebirth.
10. Upatthambhakakamma: Good or bad Kamma which has a supportive role.
11. Upapilakakamma: Good or bad Kamma which has an oppressive role.
12. Upaghatkakamma: Good or bad Kamma which has a destructive role.

During the tenth Buddhist century, there was a very important commentator by the name of Phrabuddhaghosacara. He was a Buddhist monk from the kingdom of Magadha in ancient India. He was a scholarly sage that had a deep understanding of the Buddhist Scriptures. Not long after he became ordained as a Buddhist monk, he was advised by Phrarevatathera to go to Sri Lanka in order to translate the commentary of the Tripitaka from Sinhalese into the Magadha language. While in Sri Lanka, he was tested by Phrasanghapalamahathera, the Sri Lankan monk, in the knowledge of Buddhist Scriptures by having him explain the following two scriptural verses:

Sile patitthaya naro spanno	cittan pannanaca bhavayan
Atapi nipako bhikkhu	so iman vijataye jatan

A wise, decent person, who ordains as a Buddhist monk, is guided by persistence, awareness, and concentration. He keeps the Precepts. He practices meditation, hence, he continuously develops his wisdom and endeavors to clear away the wildness of his mind.

As a result, these two original scriptural verses gave rise to one of the most important canons in Buddhism called 'Visuddhimagga', which explains in details about Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom. This canon provides the overall structure of Kamma and categorizes it into twelve categories and three main types as follows:

**The First Type: Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of time.** There are four categories as follows:

- 1) Ditthadhammavedaniyakamma: Kamma which gives its consequences in the current existence.
- 2) Upapajjavedaniyakamma: Kamma which gives its consequences in the next existence.
- 3) Aparapariyavedaniyakamma: Kamma which gives its consequences in future existences.
- 4) Ahosikamma: Kamma which is nullified.

**The Second Type: Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of strength.** There are four categories as follows:

- 1) Garukakamma: Weighty Kamma. It can be either good or bad.
- 2) Bahulakamma or Acinnakamma: Habitual Kamma. It can be either good or bad.
- 3) Yadasannakamma: Good or bad Kamma which can be recalled near the moment of death.
- 4) Katattavapanakamma: Good or bad Kamma which occurs unintentionally.

**The Third Type: Kamma which gives its consequences according to duty.** There are four categories as follows:

- 1) Janakakamma: Good or bad Kamma which leads to one's rebirth.
- 2) Upatthambhakakamma: Good or bad Kamma which has a supportive role.
- 3) Upapilakakamma: Good or bad Kamma which has an oppressive role.
- 4) Upaghatakakamma: Good or bad Kamma which has a destructive role.

The above overall structure of Kamma and its consequences has been used as the basis for learning about the Law of Kamma up until the present time.

### **1.2.10 The Path toward the Extinguishment of Kamma**

Avijja means ignorance. Ignorance allows a being to be easily dominated by defilements. It causes the physical, verbal, and mental deeds of all beings to become deviant. This deviation from the original norm causes all consciousness to undergo the round of rebirth in a new physical form as dictated by each being's overall Kamma. The combination of consciousness and physical form makes it ready to sense all things good and bad. The eyes can detect forms. The ears can hear sounds. The nose can smell odors. The body can sense the touch. All the senses detected by these sense organs are acknowledged and stored by the mind or consciousness. They are the causality of Kamma. Regarding the extinguishment of Kamma, the Lord Buddha had this to say: **“The extinguishment of Kamma can occur when mental impression can be extinguished.”** In other words, once mental impression can be extinguished, there will no longer be any acknowledgement of happiness, suffering, non-happiness, and non-suffering, for such acknowledgement causes craving which leads to attachments. Attachments in turn lead to the endless round of rebirth. The Lord Buddha taught that the path toward the extinguishment of Kamma consists of the Noble Eightfold Path as follows:

1. Sammaditthi: Right View.
2. Sammasankappa: Right Thought.
3. Sammavaca: Right Speech.
4. Sammakammanta: Right Action.
5. Sammaajiva: Right Livelihood.
6. Sammavayama: Right Effort.
7. Sammasati: Right Mindfulness.
8. Sammasamadhi: Right Concentration.

The Lord Buddha said that **the Noble Eightfold Path and the four pairs or the eight categories of Buddhist monks could only be found in the Dhamma-Discipline and nowhere else.**

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Pair of Buddhist Monks:** Individuals that have attained the first stage of holiness. They include Sotapattimagga (the Path of Stream Entrance) and Sotapattiphala (the Fruit of Stream Entry).

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Pair of Buddhist Monks:** Individuals that have attained the second stage of holiness. They include Sakadagamimagga (the Path of Once-Returning) and Sakadagamiphala (the Fruit of Once-Returning).



**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Pair of Buddhist Monks:** Individuals that have attained the third stage of holiness. They include Anagamimagga (the Path of Never-Returning) and Anagamiphala (the Fruit of Never-Returning).

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Pair of Buddhist Monks:** Individuals that have attained the fourth stage of holiness. They include Arahattamagga (the Path of Arahathship) and Arahattaphala (Final Emancipation).

When an individual practices according to the Noble Eightfold Path, it enables him to realize the Dhamma and attain different stages of holiness. Holy individuals can destroy defilements, which range from an initial level to the final level. Once the first stage of holiness is attained, the holy individual will have removed his defilements to such an extent that he will have between one to seven rebirths in the Human Realm left. Once the second stage of holiness is attained, the holy individual will have removed his defilements to such an extent that he will have only one rebirth in the Human Realm left. Once the third stage of holiness is attained, the holy individual will have removed his defilements to such an extent that he will never be reborn in the Human Realm again but will attain Nibbana as a Brahma being from the Brahma Realm. Once the final stage of holiness is attained, the holy individual will have already destroyed all defilements within him. With the complete extinguishment of defilements, no more Kamma can occur and the holy individual is emancipated from the round of rebirth. The levels of residual defilements are dependent on the attainment of the initial stages of holiness. Individuals that can attain these stages of holiness do so during their human existence when they are fortunate enough to have found the Lord Buddha's Teachings. Celestial beings have much less an opportunity to attain any stages of holiness because they are still immersed in the ecstasy of their existence. It goes without saying that beings of the States of Unhappiness suffer so horrifically and continually that they do not have any opportunity to perform a good deed, left alone attaining any of the stages of holiness.

### **1.3 The Law of Kamma as Taught in Different Religious Beliefs**

It is a universal fact that humanity is divided as a result of different ideas and beliefs. Individuals that share similar ideas and beliefs seek to be with each other. This self-imposed segregation has been with humanity all throughout the ages. During the time of our Lord Buddha, there was a widespread of different ideas and beliefs. The ideas and beliefs of some religious sects were good but others were questionable. The Lord Buddha made comments about these different sects, their ideas and beliefs according to how well or how much their ideas and beliefs corresponded to the Law of Kamma.

Ideas and beliefs which go against the Law of Kamma are as follows:

1. Alms-giving has no consequences.
2. Aid-giving has no consequences.
3. Revering those who are worthy of our reverence has no consequences.
4. An action has no consequences.
5. The reality of this world does not exist.
6. The hereafter does not exist.
7. Motherhood is inconsequential.
8. Fatherhood is inconsequential.
9. There is no such thing as ‘Spontaneous Rising’.
10. Enlightened monks, who can penetrate the whole truth about existence and teach it to others, do not exist.

These ideas and beliefs arise from wrong understanding and are called ‘Wrong View’. Any individuals that have these beliefs are said to be ‘Wrong View’ individuals. These ‘Wrong View’ individuals can be further grouped into three main categories as follows:

- 1.3.1 Natthikaditthi:** A belief in nihilism. These individuals tend to pride themselves on having a logical and advanced thinking. They may even antagonize an Arahat as a result of their ‘Wrong View’.
- 1.3.2 Akiriyaditthi:** The belief that an action has no consequences. Whatever good deed that one does or asks another to do earns no merit. Whatever bad deed that one does or asks another to do earns no retribution. Believers of these ideas deny the existence of the Law of Kamma and the importance of morality.
- 1.3.3 Ahetukaditthi:** A belief in non-causality. They believe that an individual’s life is not affected by anything but his own fate, which is dictated by his astrological

birth chart. Individuals that subscribe to this belief will abandon themselves to their so called fate and show no desire to improve upon their situation. They believe that there is no connection between cause and effect and everything is the way it has to be.

‘Wrong View’ causes human beings to be dominated by defilements, which drive them to commit all kinds of misdeeds. These misdeeds cause suffering for themselves and for society here and now and cause them to go to the States of Unhappiness after they die. Therefore, the Lord Buddha taught that having the ‘Wrong View’ is a worse offense than any other types of unwholesomeness. ‘Wrong View’ causes human beings to be irresponsible and to be unreceptive to anything decent.

If one should wonder why we need to learn about ‘Wrong View’, it can be explained in this way. When a person lives in filth, when he hears about the virtue of cleanliness, it is difficult for him to understand what cleanliness is and what use it can be. Only when he has seen both filth and cleanliness can he understand the virtue of cleanliness. In the same manner, a person can understand the virtue of ‘Right View’ when he can truly appreciate the harm caused by ‘Wrong View’.

## **1.4 The Advantages Gained from Learning about the Law of Kamma**

Knowledge of the Law of Kamma has the power to elevate the consciousness of ordinary human beings to that of holy individuals. The following are the advantages which can be gained in this and future existences from knowing about the Law of Kamma.

- 1. The knowledge helps us to be motivated to perform only good deeds from this day onward.** It helps us realize that the fortunate circumstances of our current existence are due to our past accumulated merit or the effects of our past good Kamma and these effects have finite duration in that they can be spent. Therefore, we need to continue accumulating good deeds in order to ensure that our merit is constantly replenished. For those of us who meet with unfortunate circumstances in the current existence, we should not be discouraged. Now that we know what constitutes good and bad Kamma, we can choose to perform only good Kamma on a continuous basis because the good things we do today will go to create a brighter future for us tomorrow.
- 2. The knowledge helps us to abandon all misdeeds** because it helps us realize the harm which our misdeeds can have on ourselves, on society, and on the environment.
- 3. The knowledge helps us not to be complacent by thinking that it is enough that we do not commit any misdeed and there should be no need for us to perform any**

**good deed.** It helps us realize the fact that every breath which we take uses up part of our accumulated past merit. Therefore, our past accumulated merit is continuously being spent. It helps us realize the fact that death can come to us without any advanced warning. Therefore, we must seize every opportunity to perform good deeds.

**4. The knowledge helps us to use our body in the most worthwhile manner possible.**

Whether we possess a healthy body or a handicapped one, we realize that it is the result of our overall past Kamma. A handicapped body can still be used to perform many good deeds. Healthy or handicapped, we must learn to control our impulses by controlling our body, our words, and our thoughts so that we do not fall prey to the dictate of our defilements. A handicapped body that is used to perform good deeds is far more superior to a healthy body that is used to commit misdeeds.

**5. The knowledge helps us to have a firm belief in the Law of Kamma.**

This belief in turn helps us to be increasingly conscious of our action and its consequences so much so that it becomes our second nature. The consequences of good deeds are a healthy body and a healthy mind; economical success through right livelihood and respectability. The consequences of our good deeds propel us to meet with ever increasing success and prosperity.

**6. The knowledge helps us to design our life for both this and future existences.**

We can choose whether we want to experience success and prosperity or to experience abject poverty. Most people believe that we cannot choose the circumstances in which we are born. The truth is we can if we truly understand the Law of Kamma and how it works. We can design our next rebirth by choosing to perform our physical deeds, verbal deeds, and mental deeds accordingly.

**7. The knowledge helps us to set appropriate goals for our life.**

We learn from the Law of Kamma that the root cause of our problems is our action which in turn impacts our lifestyle, our business, our society, and our environment. Therefore, to solve the root cause of our problems, we must bear in mind at all times that we are here to perform good deeds, accumulate merit, and pursue Perfections. For these purposes, we can design our lives by setting the objective of our lives at three different levels as follows:

- **The primary level of our life objective:** To experience ease and comfort in the current existence.
- **The secondary level of our life objective:** To experience ecstasy in our next existence in the Celestial Realm.
- **The tertiary level of our life objective:** To elevate our physical, verbal, and mental status to the point where emancipation from defilements can be achieved and the round of rebirth can be terminated.

**8. The knowledge helps us to teach and train our self and others to behave properly.**

The true nature of our consciousness is beautiful and bright. It can imbibe the

goodness of sound advices and help us to feel motivated to do good deeds. Moreover, we can benefit others by becoming their virtuous friend.

- 9. The knowledge helps us not to be heedless in the way we live our lives.** It helps us to pay attention to every small deed and makes us realize why the Lord Buddha taught us to practice generosity, observe the Precepts, and practice meditation. The practice of meditation brings about wisdom, which can guide us to live our lives correctly.
  
- 10. The knowledge prevents us from wrong thinking.** Human beings tend to have wide imaginings and this poses a great risk where true knowledge about the earth and our existence is concerned. For instance, instead of accepting the truth about the natural aging process of our body, we try to search for a magical remedy that can make us immortal. Some of us are of the opinion that the earth will last forever. Others believe that the reality of this world does not exist and the hereafter does not exist. They believe that death is final and signifies the end of everything. These are all dangerous imaginings which give deleterious consequences.

### **Exercises**

After the student finishes studying this chapter, please complete the test, and exercises 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 before beginning the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **THE KAMMA PRINCIPLE AS TAUGHT IN BUDDHISM**

### **Topics Covered in Chapter 2**

- 2.1 What Is the Kamma Principle?**
- 2.2 The Sutta that Teaches How the Law of Kamma Causes Us To Be Uniquely Different.**
- 2.3 The Complex Mechanism by which Kamma Gives Its Consequences.**
- 2.4 How Should a Non-Believer in the Law of Kamma Conduct His/Her Life?**

## Concepts

1. The Lord Buddha discovered that the Law of Kamma was a law of nature which could not be violated. It must be obeyed by all human beings otherwise they will incur ill consequences. Therefore, the Lord Buddha had taken the time to teach about the Law of Kamma and provide the Kamma Principle as the framework for our conduct. The Kamma Principle states that whoever performs good Kamma will receive good consequences. Whoever performs bad Kamma will receive bad consequences. That is we reap what we sow. Therefore, we should base what we do, say, or think on the Kamma Principle.
2. Human beings are uniquely different from birth in terms of our looks, our social standing, our economical status, etc. What then causes us to be uniquely different? The Lord Buddha discovered that our uniqueness was determined by our uniquely different past overall Kamma. The details of this teaching are recorded in the Culakammavibhanga Sutta.
3. The Kamma Principle is deceptively simple. It is actually very difficult to understand especially the part about the consequences of Kamma. It is the reason why many people say that ‘they cannot readily witness good Kamma which gives good consequences but what is evident to them is bad Kamma which gives good consequences.’ This wrong view occurs because there are certain decent individuals who have performed good deeds all their lives but still suffer hardship while there are certain immoral individuals who for example operate in the black market become rich and respectable. This apparent contrariness to the Kamma Principle stems from the fact that the workings of the Law of Kamma are highly complex and cannot be reasoned with mere intellect but can only be witnessed via the Threefold Knowledge attained as a result of elevated meditative attainments. The Threefold Knowledge allows one to witness the complex workings of the Law of Kamma. Since we cannot yet attain the Threefold Knowledge, we must learn about the Law of Kamma from the Lord Buddha’s Teachings and endeavor to practice accordingly in order to keep our lives out of harm’s way.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to correctly describe the Kamma Principle as taught in Buddhism.
2. To enable the student to correctly describe the contents of the Culakammavibhanga Sutta.
3. To enable the student to correctly describe the complexity of the way Kamma gives its consequences.
4. To enable the student to advise non-believers on how to conduct their lives.



## **THE KAMMA PRINCIPLE AS TAUGHT IN BUDDHISM**

The student has now gained a fundamental understanding about the Law of Kamma from studying Chapter 1. In this chapter, the student will learn about the Kamma Principle, which lies at the heart of the Law of Kamma. The Law of Kamma is universal and applies to every human being. In this chapter, the student will also learn about the complex mechanism by which Kamma gives its consequences and how non-believers in the Law of Kamma should conduct their lives.

### **2.1 What Is the Kamma Principle?**

From the courses ‘Buddhist Cosmology’ and ‘The Worlds of the Hereafter’, the student has already learnt that human beings are not born only once but undergo an endless round of rebirth as dictated by each individual’s overall Kamma. Rebirth will not end until our defilements can be completely destroyed and Nibbana can be attained. Only then will we escape from the round of rebirth and our emancipation is complete.

It is amazing that although all living beings have been reborn countless of times, none can recall the past misdeeds that cause us to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness or the past good deeds that cause us to be reborn in the States of Happiness. Avijja or ignorance serves as a thick veil that hides such knowledge from us. As a result, all of us are at the mercy of our own past overall merit and demerit as well as the environment into which we are born. Since the way Kamma sends forth its consequences is highly complex, there are non-believers in the Law of Kamma even among individuals that have only a superficial knowledge of Buddhism.

To be on the safe side, it behooves us to believe in the enlightened knowledge of the Lord Buddha for the reason that it has taken superhuman efforts throughout countless lifetimes for a Buddha-to-be or Bodhisatta to finally be able to extinguish all defilements and become enlightened as the Lord Buddha. The first time that our Bodhisatta was aware of the trap of endless suffering called the round of rebirth, He made a vow that one day in the very distant future, He would become enlightened as a Buddha and help guide His fellow beings to be emancipated from the round of rebirth. He had subsequently spent countless lifetimes pursuing His Perfections by laying down His life to do everything He needed to do to continually loosen the grip of defilements. With each passing lifetime, He became more and more chaste physically, verbally, and mentally until finally in His final rebirth, He could completely extinguish all defilements from His consciousness. As a result, He could destroy the thick veil of ignorance and penetrate the whole truth about all the forms of living beings and all the realms of existence.

With the utmost compassion, the Lord Buddha had spent many years teaching living beings to liberate themselves from the domination of defilements.

The Lord Buddha placed a great emphasis on the Law of Kamma because if anyone violates this law, it will have deleterious effect on his life and cause him to suffer tremendously in this and future existences. The Scriptures mentioned many Teachings regarding the Law of Kamma but here we will refer to the **Venasakha Jataka**<sup>1</sup> as follows:

Yani karoti puriso                      tani attani passati  
Kalayanakari kalayanan      papakari ca papakan  
Yatisan vapate bijan      tadsan ruhate phalanx

Whatever deed an individual performs, he can witness it within himself.  
A good deed has good consequences; a bad deed has bad consequences.  
Whatever an individual sows, so will he reap.

This saying of the Lord Buddha defines the Kamma Principle directly and needs no further interpretation. There is no such thing as a deed that has no consequences, for every deed, be it good or bad, has its corresponding consequences. Whoever does a good deed, he will receive its good consequences. Whoever does a bad deed, he will receive its bad consequences. If we plant a mango tree, it will always yield only mangoes and not any other type of fruit. The Kamma Principle is generally abbreviated as ‘a good deed brings good consequences; a bad deed brings bad consequences.’

The Kamma Principle can be compared to Newtonian physics which states that to every action there is a reaction. This law of physics has to do with the physical world in that if we throw a tennis ball against the wall, it will bounce back. If we throw it very hard, it will also bounce back very hard. In the same token the Kamma Principle states that if we perform a good deed, we will receive its good consequences; if we perform a bad deed, we will receive its bad consequences. The weightiness of our deed is also reflected by the intensity of its consequences.

The complex mechanism of the Law of Kamma comes from the fact that in each of our countless lifetimes, we have accumulated both good and bad deeds. These countless number of deeds have continued to exert their effects in our present as well as future existences. Therefore, it is impossible for ordinary individuals to be able to decipher which effect belongs to which deed. In fact, we cannot possibly tell what past accumulated deeds cause us to be the way we are today in terms of our looks, our family, our character, our level of education, our career, etc., and how they will affect our future existences.

Whether we meet with fortunate or unfortunate circumstances in this lifetime is not influenced by external factors such as the stars, the planets, the moon, the sun but they are a result of our overall

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<sup>1</sup> Jataka means birth – stories.

past Kamma. Whether we meet with happiness or unhappiness in this lifetime is not dependent solely on our current Kamma. At any point and time, we are affected by our overall Kamma, which includes all of our accumulated Kamma throughout our countless lifetimes as well as our current Kamma or all the deeds that we have performed in the current lifetime.

Therefore, if we do something bad and we continue to prosper, it does not mean that the Law of Kamma is not operating. It only means that the particular bad Kamma is not yielding its consequences just yet. It behooves us to believe the Lord Buddha's Teachings, which state that the Law of Kamma is real and relevant at all times. It is the law of cause and effect. Once there is a cause, the effect will follow. It is only a matter of time and place. We should, therefore, accumulate only good deeds and stay away from misdeeds for the rest of our lives.

## **2.2 The Sutta that Teaches How the Law of Kamma Causes Us To Be Uniquely Different**

The student who has taken the course 'The Worlds of the Hereafter' may remember that what causes human beings to be uniquely different is our individual overall past Kamma. In this course, we will delve more deeply into the subject to allow the student to gain a deeper understanding of how the Law of Kamma makes all living beings different from each other.

Details of this topic were taken from a well-known Sutta which describes the Law of Kamma in an easily understood manner. This Sutta is called '**Culakammavibhanga Sutta**'. This section will give a summary of the Sutta and certain parts will be covered in detail. It will also include the discussion from the Commentary to allow the student to gain an overview of the Sutta.

**The Culakammavibhanga Sutta:** The Sutta which deals with the Kamma Principle.

During the time of the Lord Buddha, there was a Brahmin by the name of 'Todeyaya'. He lived in the city of Savatthi of the Kosala Kingdom. He was a very wealthy man and was worth 870 millions. He had an only son by the name of 'Subhamanob'. Their home was not very far from the great Jetavana Temple. In spite of his great wealth, the Brahmin had never given any alms. He had never even offered one ladleful of rice or bowed to a Buddhist monk. He did not believe in the Lord Buddha and was in the habit of chasing Him away every time the Lord Buddha passed by his house.

This miserly Brahmin had taught his son not to be a spendthrift but to accumulate wealth the way termites collected tiny clumps of dirt until they could build a termite mound. Or the way bees collected honey drop by drop until the beehive was full of honey.

In time the miserly Brahmin fell ill and eventually died without ever having told his son where he had hidden his treasures. The miserly Brahmin was reborn a dog in the house as a result of his attachment to his treasures. When 'Subhamanob' first saw the puppy, he instantly felt a deep love for it but had no idea that the puppy was the rebirth form of his dead father. He took special care of the puppy and treated it very well.

One morning, while the Lord Buddha was checking to see who could be saved on that day, the image of ‘Subhamanob’ appeared to Him. The Lord Buddha already knew that ‘Subhamanob’ would later become a lay devotee but the dog would be reborn in the Hell Realm after it died.

In the same morning, the Lord Buddha went on His alms-round and went to stand in front of Subhamanob’s house but he was not in. None of his servants offered any alms to the Lord Buddha because they were not Buddhists. When the puppy saw the Lord Buddha, it began to bark angrily at the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha said to the puppy, “Todeyaya Brahmin, in your previous life, you had insulted me and that misdeed caused you to be reborn a dog. You are repeating your misdeed as a dog. When you die, you will be reborn in the Hell Realm of Mahanarok.” The puppy understood what the Lord Buddha said and ran into the house in fright. It refused to lie down in its beautiful bed but went to lie down on a pile of ashes inside the stove. The servants tried to put it in its bed but it kept returning to the pile of ashes.

The Lord Buddha subsequently returned to the great Jetavana Temple. In the meantime, ‘Subhamanob’ returned home to find his beloved dog lying on top of the pile of ashes. He was so irritated that he scolded his servants. The servants told him what had happened during his absence, he became angry that the Lord Buddha said that his dead father had been reborn a dog when in fact he had been foretold by other Brahmins that his father would be reborn in the Brahma Realm. As a result, he went directly to the temple with the intention of finding faults with the Lord Buddha.

At the temple, he refused to pay the Lord Buddha homage but remained standing while he asked the Lord Buddha about what had happened at his house. The Lord Buddha did not say anything, for He wanted the man to witness the truth about his father’s rebirth for himself. The Lord Buddha told the man that the dog knew where the treasures were hidden and told him what he needed to do in order to get the dog to show him the hiding place. ‘Subhamanob’ thought it an excellent idea because if the treasures were not found, he would tell everyone that the Lord Buddha had lied. But if the treasures could be located, he would have money for his own use. He had nothing to lose either way.

As soon as ‘Subhamanob’ went home, he did everything as instructed by the Lord Buddha. He fed the puppy a rice dish made with milk and let the puppy lie down. He then asked the puppy where the treasures were hidden by whispering into its ear. As soon as the puppy heard the question, he realized that his son knew who he was. The puppy jumped up and howled before running to where the treasures were buried. It dug the ground with its paws. Subhamanob then had his servants begin digging in the area. To his surprise, there were indeed many treasures hidden under the area. He found to his amazement that everything turned out exactly as what the Lord Buddha had said and realized how the Lord Buddha was not an ordinary individual but had to have already attained Enlightenment. He then rushed to see the Lord Buddha at the temple and paid Him a deep homage. It was on this occasion that he asked the Lord Buddha about what caused human beings to be born uniquely different and the Lord Buddha answered:

Behold, young man, all beings possess their own Kamma. They are heirs to their Kamma. Their Kamma determines their birth and their race. They have Kamma as their refuge. Kamma divides beings into crudeness and refinement.

It can be concluded from this saying that what causes the differences among all living beings is each living being's unique overall Kamma. The Lord Buddha's saying can be further explained as follows:

**We Are Heirs to Our Kamma:** It means that each being is the owner of its own Kamma. Extraneous objects such as money and material wealth are for our temporary use only. When we die, none of these things can go with us. The only thing that follows our consciousness or soul is our good and bad Kamma. It follows us throughout our endless lifetimes wherever our rebirth may take us. Our real possession then is the good and bad Kamma that we have performed and not our material wealth.

What we will receive as inheritance from our parents and grandparents is not certain but we will most certainly receive the consequences of our Kamma. Our Kamma is our own and cannot be passed on to anybody else or shared with others. For example, when an individual has an accident and is injured, he/she alone experiences the pain and suffering of his/her injury. His/her relatives can come and visit but cannot possibly share any pain and suffering with him/her. It is the same way with Kamma and its consequences.

**Our Kamma Determines Our Birth:** It means that we are reborn because we still possess Kamma and its consequences. That is, we still possess defilements. Our past overall Kamma, which is branded on our consciousness, determines the realm and the circumstances of our rebirth. An individual that is completely devoid of Kamma such as an Arahant will not undergo anymore rebirth. Parents are the path by which a living being that still possesses Kamma can be reborn into the Human Realm. Some individuals have been parents and children for many consecutive lifetimes. Some individuals do not share their parents' characteristics. Individual characteristics are the result of each individual's overall Kamma. In the case where parents and children share similar characteristics, it means that they share similar overall Kamma.

Children of virtuous parents owe their parents a great debt of gratitude because they have selflessly devoted themselves to the upbringing of their children. But not all parents can bring their children up to be good and decent. A child with past accumulated good Kamma which causes him/her to be well-behaved knows not to imitate his/her parents' bad deeds because they went contrary to his/her nature. Soon enough he/she will find a more suitable place of his/her own. Such is the meaning of 'their Kamma determines their birth'.

**Our Kamma Determines Our Race:** It means that our Kamma is our race in that it is constantly with us. It protects us when we are asleep and when we are awake. It helps us to prosper. Or it can trip us up, degrade us, and destroy us. Our clan and our siblings may be able to help us sometimes. At times they may turn against us. When we grow up, we may move to live in a different country, in a different continent. It is not so easy then to help each other out in times of need. Siblings may differ widely in terms of their intelligence, level of education, level of success in life, etc. Therefore, our clan and our siblings are not where we truly belong, are not truly our race but our Kamma is.

**We Have Kamma as Our Refuge:** It means that our accumulated good Kamma alone is our true refuge for always not only in this lifetime but in future lifetimes as well. In life, we may be able to depend on our parents, our siblings, our friends for a time and from time to time but not for always and forever.

The explanation above aims to emphasize the fact that Kamma is the root cause of our individual differences.

After ‘Subhamanob’ heard the Lord Buddha’s answer, he requested the Lord Buddha to elaborate on the subject and the Lord Buddha graciously did as follows:

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Pair:** A short lifespan is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual had taken another being’s life on a regular basis. He/she was violent and cruel and did not feel any compassion for other living beings. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Hell Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a short lifespan.

A long lifespan is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual had abstained from taking another being’s life. He/she was ashamed of misdeeds and fearful of their ill consequences. He/she showed compassion toward other living beings and helped them out as they could. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Celestial Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Celestial Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a long lifespan.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Pair:** Being plagued by many illnesses is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual had routinely abused other beings by using his/her hand, clumps of dirt, a club or some other types of implements. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Hell Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would be sickly.

Health is caused by the fact that one past existence or more the individual did not abuse other beings by using his/her hand, clumps of dirt, a club or some other types of implements. After he/she died, he/she had a rebirth in the Celestial Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Celestial Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would be healthy.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Pair:** A poor complexion is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more the individual was easily angered, malicious, filled with vengeful anger, filled with ill will and vengefulness. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Hell Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a poor complexion.

A good complexion is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual was not easily angered, was not malicious, was not filled with vengeful anger and was not filled with ill will and vengefulness. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Celestial Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Celestial Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a good complexion.

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Pair:** A low level of authority is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more the individual had harbored envy and jealousy when other people received accolade, respect, and admiration. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Hell Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a low level of authority.

A high level of authority is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more the individual did not harbor envy and jealousy when other people received accolade, respect, and admiration. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Celestial Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Celestial Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a high level of authority.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Pair:** Poverty is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual did not give alms in terms of food, water, cloths, means of transportation, scented articles, skin treatments, mattresses, shelter, and sources of light to monks who practiced chastity. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Hell Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would be poor.

Wealth is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual regularly gave alms in terms of food, water, cloths, means of transportation, scented articles, skin treatments, mattresses, shelter, and sources of light to monks who practiced chastity. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Celestial Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Celestial Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would be wealthy.

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Pair:** A low birth is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual was rude and arrogant. He/she refused to pay homage to those that were worthy of respect. He/she did not rise to welcome virtuous guests. He/she did not defer to virtuous individuals. He/she was disrespectful and irreverent. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Hell Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a low birth.

A high birth is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual was polite and humble. He/she paid homage to those that were worthy of respect. He/she was hospitable, respectful, and deferential. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Celestial Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Celestial Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would have a high birth.

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Pair:** A low intelligence is caused by the fact that one past existence or more, the individual did not approach learned monks to find out from them about what was wholesome and unwholesome; what was harmful and what was not; what should be consumed and what should not be; what deeds did not give advantages but led to eternal suffering; what deeds were beneficial and conducive to eternal happiness. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Hell Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would possess a low intelligence.

A high intelligence is caused by the fact that in one past existence or more, the individual regularly visited learned monks to find out from them about what was wholesome and unwholesome; what was harmful and what was not; what should be consumed and what should not be; what deeds did not give advantages but led to eternal suffering; what deeds were beneficial and conducive to eternal happiness. After he/she died, he/she would have a rebirth in the Celestial Realm. If for some Kammic reasons, he/she was not reborn in the Celestial Realm but in the Human Realm, he/she would possess a high intelligence.

The above detail can be tabulated as follows:

	Unwholesome Kamma		Wholesome Kamma	
	Cause	Effect	Cause	Effect
1	Killing	Short lifespan	No killing	Long lifespan
2	Abusing other beings	Being sickly	Not abusing other beings	Being healthy
3	Easily angered	Bad complexion	Not easily angered	Good complexion
4	Being envious & jealous	Low level of authority	Not being envious or jealous	High level of authority
5	Not giving alms	Poverty	Giving alms	Wealth
6	Being rude & arrogant	A low birth	Being humble & gentle	A high birth
7	Not eager to learn from sages	A low intelligence	Eager to learn from sages	A high intelligence



The material covered in this topic shows that every deed has its consequences. The types of Kamma and their consequences given above are but a few examples of obvious deeds and obvious consequences. There is actually an intricate pattern of how every deed and its consequences cause us to be uniquely different. The most extraordinary physical appearance of the Perfect Man as seen in the personage of the Lord Buddha consists of 32 features and can be obtained once the Ten Perfections at all three levels have been cultivated to the fullest extent. Therefore, our overall Kamma determines our looks, our character, our intelligence, our birth, our level of education, our level of success in life, our health, and indeed every aspect of our life.

The knowledge of the Law of Kamma should prevent us from committing any misdeed which will bring deleterious consequences. At the same time, it should encourage us to accumulate only good deeds for the rest of our lives.

### 2.3 The Complex Mechanism by which Kamma Gives Its Consequences

Many ‘Wrong View’ individuals who have not studied the Lord Buddha’s Teachings or they may have but do not practice what they have learnt tend to disbelieve the Kamma Principle. The fact that the Law of Kamma cannot be directly witnessed due to its complex mechanism only exacerbates the situation for these misguided individuals. As a result, they pay no attention to the Kamma Principle and the Law of Kamma. Here the student will have the opportunity to learn about the complex mechanism by which Kamma gives its consequences. The knowledge of the pain and suffering of the round of rebirth should prevent the student from making any Kammic mistake.

As mentioned earlier, the law of Kamma is complex and cannot be understood by mere observation and consideration or conjecture. The Lord Buddha taught that the Law of Kamma is unthinkable and is beyond human understanding.

The detail of this topic was taken from the **Mahakammavibhanga Sutta**. This Sutta teaches us about the complex mechanism by which Kamma gives its consequences. Two individuals may perform the same Kamma but their Kamma will give different consequences. Even individuals that have attained the ‘Celestial Eye’ will experience the Law of Kamma differently. This Sutta can help the student gain a deeper understanding of the complex mechanism by which Kamma gives its consequences.

An abbreviated version of this Sutta is as follows. During the time of the Lord Buddha, there was a wandering ascetic by the name of ‘Potaliputra’. He had a conversation with a Buddhist monk called ‘Phra Smiddhi’ who had only been a monk for only 3 years. The ascetic had heard it said that our Lord Buddha taught that physical deeds were not real, verbal deeds were not real, and only mental deeds were real. Moreover, there existed meditative attainments where the practitioner did not experience any feeling. ‘Phra Smiddhi’ knew that what the ascetic had heard did not correspond with the Lord Buddha’s Teachings and told him so. ‘Potaliputra’ then asked what consequences an intentional physical act, an intentional verbal act, and an intentional

mental act would give and 'Phra Smiddhi' answered that they would result in suffering. 'Potaliputra' did not believe Phra Smiddhi's answer but did not object to it.

After 'Potaliputra' left, 'Phra Smiddhi' recounted the incident to Phra Ananta. Phra Ananta felt the incident to have some significance and informed the Lord Buddha about it. The Lord Buddha criticized 'Phra Smiddhi' for having answered the question one-sidedly when he should have given different answers according to different circumstances even though 'Potaliputra' did not specify in his question if the Kamma was good or bad.

The Lord Buddha took the opportunity to teach about the four types of individuals as follows:

- (1) The First Situation: Some individuals on earth routinely take the life of another living being, take what does not belong to them, engage in sexual misconduct, make false speech, make divisive speech, use offensive language, make nonsensical speech, are filled with ignorance and vengeance. They have 'Wrong View'. After they die, they will be destined for the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Place of Suffering, the Hell Realm.
- (2) The Second Situation: Some individuals on earth routinely take the life of another living being, take what does not belong to them, engage in sexual misconduct, make false speech, make divisive speech, use offensive language, make nonsensical speech, are filled with ignorance and vengeance. They have 'Wrong View'. After they die, they will be destined for the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm.
- (3) The Third Situation: Some individuals on earth abstain from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, from divisive speech, from offensive language, from nonsensical speech. They are not filled with ignorance. They are not filled with vengeance. They have 'Right View'. After they die, they will be destined for the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm.
- (4) The Fourth Situation: Some individuals on earth abstain from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, from divisive speech, from offensive language, from making nonsensical speech. They are not filled with ignorance. They are not filled with vengeance. They have 'Right View'. After they die, they will be destined for the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Place of Suffering, the Hell Realm.

The Lord Buddha then went on to teach about the four categories of Brahmins that have similar ‘Celestial Eye’ but make different statements about the Law of Kamma as follows:

The 1<sup>st</sup> category of Brahmins witness the death and rebirth of humans belonging to the first situation as described above. Therefore, they conclude that bad Kamma exists, so do the consequences of bad Kamma.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> category of Brahmins witness the death and rebirth of humans belonging to the second situation as described above. Therefore, they conclude that bad Kamma does not exist; neither do the consequences of bad Kamma.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> category of Brahmins witness the death and rebirth of humans belonging to the third situation as described above. Therefore, they conclude that good Kamma exists, so do the consequences of good Kamma.

The 4<sup>th</sup> category of Brahmins witness the death and rebirth of humans belonging to the fourth situation as described above. They conclude that good Kamma does not exist; neither do the consequences of good Kamma.

The Lord Buddha went on to further explain the opinions of these four categories of Brahmins, some of which He agreed with and some of which He disagreed with. The Lord Buddha explained the types of Kamma, the possessors of the Kamma, and the consequences of the Kamma as follows:

1. An individual that kills, steals, etc., is reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Place of Suffering, in the Hell Realm because he/she had performed bad Kamma of which consequences is suffering during the past existences or he/she has ‘Wrong View’ at the time of death.
2. An individual that kills, steals, etc., is reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm because he/she had performed good Kamma of which consequences is happiness during the past existences or he/she has ‘Right View’ at the time of death.
3. An individual that abstains from killing, stealing, etc., is reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm because he/she had performed good Kamma of which consequences is happiness during the past existences or he/she has ‘Right View’ at the time of death.
4. An individual that abstains from killing, stealing, etc., is reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Place of Suffering, in the Hell Realm because he/she had performed bad Kamma of which consequences is suffering during the past existences or he/she has ‘Wrong View’ at the time of death.

At the end of the Sutta, the Lord Buddha concluded that Kamma gave definite consequences but it could not always be said that when good Kamma had been performed then one would be destined for the States of Happiness; or that when bad Kamma had been performed then one would be destined for the States of Unhappiness. There are other factors that come into play such as good or bad Kamma that had been performed in the past existences; good or bad Kamma that are performed in the present; whether at the time of death, one has 'Right or Wrong View'.

This Sutta shows clearly the complex mechanism by which Kamma gives its consequences. This mechanism cannot be conjectured or rationalized using common wisdom. Individuals that have attained the 'Celestial Eye' at a certain level but cannot yet penetrate the truth in its entirety may have right understanding about some things but wrong understanding about others and their teachings can be misleading as in the above examples of the four categories of Brahmins. Incomplete knowledge which results in misinformation can cause an individual to live his/her life incorrectly, the result of which is a rebirth in the States of Loss and Woe.

The complex workings of the Law of Kamma make it easy for people to misinterpret it. Ultimately, it is crucially important that we have deep faith in the enlightened Knowledge of the Lord Buddha and choose to believe the Law of Kamma in its entirety in order to ensure our safe journey in Samsara and the eventual destruction of defilements. The more good deeds we can consistently accumulate, the faster we will be able to witness their good consequences. When we can witness the Law of Kamma ourselves, our understanding of the Law of Kamma will also deepen and our confidence in the Lord Buddha's Teachings will grow. Our more developed faith will enable us to live our lives accordingly.

## **2.4 How Should a Non-Believer in the Law of Kamma Conduct His/Her Life?**

We are living in an age where scientific discoveries have caused great advancement in technology and tremendous changes in society. Human beings have gone from agriculture to industry and now to the age of information in just a couple of centuries. In this age of information with its fast and extensive network of communication, the world has become a global village.

Scientific advancement and the corresponding changes in society have an impact on how we think and what we believe. In ancient times, people believed in things that they could not see such as deities. This kind of belief was the origin of theism on which many religions were based. Some of these religions remain to this day. With technological advances, people began to put faith in what could be rationalized and proven. During the time period where theism reached its pinnacle and had worldwide influence, there was an Italian physicist and astronomer called Galileo. He had made discoveries that had a negative impact on theism. As Galileo gained popularity because of his discoveries that could be proven and rationalized, he was persecuted by the dominant religion of the time throughout the rest of his life.

Different forms of theism persist until now with some modification to fit better with the current age. Education plays an important role in developing human intelligence and intellect. Recent surveys in regards to religious belief have been conducted in many countries and it was found that more and more people do not subscribe to any religious belief. Some people think of religion as being nonsensical because its teachings cannot be proven. Some people do not see any advantages that can be gained from having a religion. They would just as soon live without any religious obligation or restriction.

The results of these surveys are worrying because if people do not subscribe to a religion, how would it affect society and the world at large? Without any religious principles to guide the way one should conduct one's life, one would become further and further distant from morality and other ethical standards. The difference between right and wrong becomes more and more blurred. One becomes increasingly materialistic and lives life as one pleases. When that is the case, what good then can come out of one's life?

The student has probably learnt about the origin of different religions and found that most religions provide useful teachings that foster a happy lifestyle and peace in the community. Here we will mention only Buddhism, which is the religion about cause and effect. The Lord Buddha taught us how to live our lives so that we can be happy in this, next, and future lifetimes and ultimately until we can rid ourselves of all defilements. Even the great scientist Albert Einstein acknowledged that Buddhism shared the same principle as science in that it is all about logic.

For individuals who do not subscribe to any religion, which include those that disbelieve in the Law of Kamma, the Lord Buddha gave concrete instructions for how they should live their lives. These Teachings were recorded in the 'Apannaka Sutta'. Here, relevant teachings of this Sutta which will enable the student to understand the way non-believers in the Law of Kamma should conduct their lives. The student can then act as a virtuous friend to these people and help them to live a happy life in the present and to have a safe journey in the round of rebirth.

For this purpose, only one example will be given here. For a more in-depth study on the teaching, the student should consult the 'Apannaka Sutta.'

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha asked the Brahmins and the wealthy men of Sala City, "Do you have a favorite Master who can inspire you to have faith because his teachings are logical?" The people answered in the negative. Therefore, the Lord Buddha took the opportunity to give the 'Apannaka' sermon where He cited different dogmas as well as the advantages and the harm of each dogma and concluded with the instruction on right conduct. A part of the teaching concerning two groups of Brahmins that have opposing views can be cited as follows:

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Group:** These people believe that alms-giving has no consequences, aid-giving has no consequences, revering those who are worthy of our reverence has no consequences, bad Kamma has no consequences, the hereafter does not exist, etc. Members of this group refuse to perform good deeds but commit only misdeeds. They are immoral. They have 'Wrong View', 'Wrong Thought', and 'Wrong Speech'. They are enemies of Arahats. For members of this group, the Lord Buddha gave the following advice:

If the hereafter does not exist, after these individuals die, all will be well.

If the hereafter does exist, these individuals will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Happiness, the Place of Suffering, the Hell Realm.

Even if the hereafter does not exist, regardless of whether these individuals' view is right or wrong, they will still be condemned here and now for their conduct.

If the hereafter does exist, these individuals will receive two forms of punishment:

- 1) They will be condemned in the present for their conduct.
- 2) They will be reborn in the Hell Realm.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Group:** These people believe that alms-giving has consequences, aid-giving has consequences, revering those who are worthy of our reverence has consequences, etc. As a result, members of this group abstain from any misdeed but perform only wholesome deeds. They are moral. They have 'Right View', 'Right Thought', and 'Right Speech'. They are not enemies of Arahats.

If the hereafter does exist, after they die they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, in the Celestial Realm.

If the hereafter does not exist, regardless of whether these individuals' view is right or wrong, they will most certainly be admired for their conduct in the present.

If the hereafter does exist, they will receive two rewards:

- 1) They will be admired in the present for their conduct.
- 2) They will be reborn in the States of Happiness, in the Celestial Realm.

The Lord Buddha taught that the first group of Brahmins had 'Wrong View' whereas the second group had 'Right View'. He also advised wrong-viewed individuals on how to change their view such that they could conduct their lives accordingly. He gave the second group of Brahmins confirmation that their view was correct and they could confidently continue to follow their dogma.

This teaching can be applied to non-believers in the Law of Kamma or in any religion because it provides them with a guiding principle by which to live their lives. Whether they believe or disbelieve in the reality of this world and the hereafter or the Law of Kamma, they can at least conduct their lives in such a way that they can meet with happiness in the present by not incurring condemnation from other people for their misdeeds. And just in case death is not final and the hereafter does exist, they will not have to endure horrific suffering in the States of Loss and Woe. Therefore, the belief in the Law of Kamma provides only advantages to its believer. It provides the correct roadmap for how to live our lives.

In conclusion, the main point of this topic is to enable the student to look at the Law of Kamma from different angles and to gain a deeper understanding of the law.

The topic covered in 2.1 has to do with the Kamma Principle, which states that a good deed has good consequences and a bad deed has bad consequences. The Kamma Principle is the heart of the Law of Kamma and is always true and operating. The speed with which the consequences of our Kamma show up in our life is dependent on various factors as well as our current conduct. The student should use the Kamma Principle to guide his/her daily conduct.

The topic covered in 2.2 points to the significance of the Law of Kamma and how it causes all beings to be uniquely different. This truth is most obvious among human beings. The information in this topic should enable the student to understand the root cause of our individual differences. Our past overall Kamma gives rise to everything that is relevant to us in the current existence. Therefore, we should perform only good deeds and make provisions for our future existences.

The topic covered in 2.3 describes the complex mechanism by which Kamma gives its consequences. Now that the student has some ideas about this complex mechanism, it should behoove the student not to conclude that the Kamma Principle is not operating or to become discouraged about performing good deeds. The student should have faith in the Lord Buddha's enlightened Knowledge, since the Lord Buddha could penetrate the entire truth about existence.

The topic covered in 2.4 demonstrates that disbelief in the Law of Kamma has damaging consequences. An individual that has no religion and does not believe in the Law of Kamma should at least conduct his/her life accordingly for his/her own safety in both this and future existences.

## **Exercises**

After the student finishes studying Chapter 2, the student should complete the test and exercises 2.1 and 2.2 in the workbook before beginning Chapter 3.

## CHAPTER 3

# THE FIRST CATEGORY OF KAMMA: KAMMA WHICH GIVES ITS CONSEQUENCES AS A FUNCTION OF DUTY

### Topics Covered in Chapter 3

#### **3.1 Janaka-kamma (Reproductive Kamma)**

- 3.1.1 The Meaning of Reproductive Kamma
- 3.1.2 Characteristics of Reproductive Kamma
- 3.1.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka
- 3.1.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka

#### **3.2 Upattham-bhaka-kamma (Supportive Kamma)**

- 3.2.1 The Meaning of Supportive Kamma
- 3.2.2 Characteristics of Supportive Kamma
- 3.2.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka
- 3.2.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka

#### **3.3 Upapi-laka-kamma (Obstructive Kamma)**

- 3.3.1 The Meaning of Obstructive Kamma
- 3.3.2 Characteristics of Obstructive Kamma
- 3.3.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka
- 3.3.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka

#### **3.4 Upa-ghataka-kamma (Destructive Kamma)**

- 3.4.1 The Meaning of Destructive Kamma
- 3.4.2 Characteristics of Destructive Kamma
- 3.4.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka
- 3.4.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka



## Concepts

1. Kamma is a complex subject and is very difficult to understand. Writers of the Commentary did try to explain this complex subject to render it more comprehensible. For this reason, they divided Kamma into three categories that included Kamma which gave its consequences as a function of duty, Kamma which gave its consequences as a function of strength, and Kamma which gave its consequences as a function of time. Each category was further divided into four types.
2. It is every human being's duty to conduct his/her life appropriately in both worldly and Dhamma concerns for the peace and prosperity of society. Every human being has a duty to perform. In the same manner, Kamma has the duty of giving positive and negative consequences to its possessor. Good and bad Kamma vie with each other constantly to give their consequences.
3. It is very important to study true stories about the Law of Kamma, which happened during the time of our Lord Buddha and were recorded in the Tripitaka. The study will allow us to get a clear picture of the consequences of Kamma and compare theory to real events.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to correctly understand and explain the meaning, the characteristics and the types of Kamma.
2. To enable the student to correctly understand and explain how each type of Kamma gives its consequences.
3. To enable the student to correctly understand and explain the logic behind the way each type of Kamma gives its consequences.

## **THE FIRST CATEGORY OF KAMMA: KAMMA WHICH GIVES ITS CONSEQUENCES AS A FUNCTION OF DUTY**

All human beings on earth have no idea why they are born and what causes the particular circumstances in their lives. Some people belong to a wealthy family. Some people belong to a poor family. Some people are healthy. Some people are handicapped. Some people are good-looking. Some people are homely. And the list goes on. What every human being has in common is the fact that we must all die. However, we have no idea when and how we will die. As a result, our existence is plagued by many puzzling questions. Scientists and psychologists have tried to theorize and rationalize our existence. They also have tried to understand the factors which influenced human behavior and different theories have been postulated. The fact is the answer to human existence and human behavior has been clearly stated in the Lord Buddha's Teachings, since the Lord Buddha could penetrate the entire truth about life and existence as a result of His Enlightenment. Therefore, He is the best personage to tell us how to best conduct our lives for our safety and for the fulfillment of our life's true purpose, which is to seek Enlightenment.

It is crucially important that every individual on earth studies the Lord Buddha's Teachings in earnest in order to gain the most important knowledge of all here and now. Only this most important body of knowledge, which helps us to increasingly accumulate more and more wholesome deeds, can help us to meet with success and happiness all through eternity.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 will cover the subject of Kamma and its different consequences. Here Kamma will be grouped into types to make this complex subject easier to understand. Details of the grouping of Kamma and its consequences can be found in the 'Mano-ratha-purani' Scripture. In this Scripture, the consequences of Kamma are divided into 11 types according to the 'Suttantik' Scripture; into 16 types according to the 'Abhi-dham'; and into 12 types as recorded in the 'Pati-sam-bhida-magga'. The detail of the 12 types of Kamma along with the three different categories of their consequences will be presented in this and the following two chapters.

The first category of the consequences of Kamma that will be covered in this chapter is called '**Kicca-catuka**', which means Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of duty. These consequences can be grouped into four types and include **Janaka-kamma** (Reproductive Kamma), **Upattham-bhaka-kamma** (Supportive Kamma), **Upapi-laka-kamma** (Obstructive Kamma), and **Upa-ghataka-kamma** (Destructive Kamma). The details are as follows:

### 3.1 Janaka-kamma (Reproductive Kamma)

#### 3.1.1 The Meaning of Reproductive Kamma

**Janaka-kamma** means Kamma which causes each consciousness to be reborn in a particular realm of existence such as the Animal Realm, the Human Realm, the Celestial Realm, etc.

#### 3.1.2 Characteristics of Reproductive Kamma

From its meaning, Reproductive Kamma can be compared to a mother who gives birth to a child. Once Reproductive Kamma causes a being to be reborn in a particular realm of existence as dictated by the being's overall Kamma, its duty is over. It is Reproductive Kamma which provides the physical makeup of each being such as its eyes, ears, nose, arms, legs, etc., be it an animal, a hell being, a human being, a celestial being, etc. In addition, Reproductive Kamma causes all beings to differ in terms of a healthy body, a handicapped body, a good-looking form, a homely form, a high birth, a low birth, a high intelligence, a low intelligence, being wealthy, being poor, etc.

There are two types of Reproductive Kamma: wholesome and unwholesome. Unwholesome Reproductive Kamma will cause a consciousness to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. These are the four States of Loss and Woe which include the Hell Realm, the Peta Realm, the Asurakaya Realm, and the Animal Realm. Examples of how Reproductive Kamma works are presented in the following case studies.

#### 3.1.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka

##### The Past Kamma of Four Hell Beings

During the time of the Lord Kassapa Buddha, there were four men who came from four wealthy families and they were very close friends. In spite of their great wealth, they did nothing to benefit others. They were reckless and committed mostly misdeeds. They transgressed the Precepts. They had affairs with married women. After they died, they were reborn in the hell realm of 'Lohakumbhi' and had experienced horrific suffering there for a total of 60,000 hell years. When each of these four hell beings struggled to the top of the punishment pit, it wanted to voice what was on its mind. The first hell being wanted to say, "**Dujjivitamajivamha yesan tena dadamhase vijjamanesu bhogesu dipannakamha attano**", which means "When I was wealthy, I did not practice generosity. I did not make any provisions for myself. I lived a life of evil." Since the hell being only had a fraction of a second before being sucked back into the hot, gigantic pot which was being constantly heated by hellfire, the only sound it managed to make was "Du".

The second hell being wanted say, “**Satthivassasahassani paripunnani subbaso niraye paccamananan kada anto bhavissati**”, which means “I have to burn in hell for 60,000 years. I have to serve my sentence. When will it ever be over?” But all it managed to say was “Sa” before it was sucked back into the hot, gigantic pot which was being constantly heated by hellfire.

The third hell being wanted to say, “**Natthi anto kuto anto na anto patidissati tada hi pakatan papan mama tumhanca marisa**”, which means “There’s no end. Where is the end? There’s no end in sight. I committed too many misdeeds.” But the only sound it managed to make was “Na”.

The fourth hell being wanted to say, “**Sohan nuna ito gantava yoni laddhana manusi vadannu silasampanno kahami kusalan pahun**”, which means “If I ever leave Lohakumbhi and am reborn in the Human Realm, I will give alms and observe the Precepts meticulously. I will accumulate many wholesome deeds.” But all it managed to say was “So”.

The misdeeds of the four men that had been committed throughout their lives became the Reproductive Kamma which caused them to serve their long and horrific sentence in the hell realm of ‘Lohakumbhi’.

### **3.1.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka**

#### **The Destiny of a Lay Devotee**

During the time of our Lord Buddha, there was a lay devotee who believed strongly in the Triple Gem. He was devoted to the Buddhist Cause. He held the Lord Buddha’s Teachings in the highest regards. He performed wholesome deeds and observed the Five Precepts regularly. On every Buddhist Holy Day, he would observe the Eight Precepts and make a food offering to the monks. Later on, he would be dressed in white clothes and make an offering of the juice of eight different fruits to the monks before listening to the Lord Buddha’s sermon. Throughout his life, he had accumulated only wholesome deeds and the reputation of his virtue spread far and wide.

After he died, the accumulation of his wholesome deeds became the Reproductive Kamma which caused him to be reborn as a gentleman celestial being in the Tavatimsa Realm. He possessed a large and magnificent white celestial elephant whose body was covered with ornaments made of precious gems. The white elephant served as his celestial vehicle that transported him to wherever he wanted. Every time this celestial being went outside his celestial castle, he would ride on this magnificent elephant accompanied by a large celestial retinue.

One night this celestial being or the former lay devotee was thinking about the Lord Buddha. So he was dressed in his most elegant attire, rode on his white elephant and descended from the Tavatimsa Realm to the earth in order to pay homage to the Lord Buddha at the Veluvana Temple. He was accompanied by his retinue.

When the gentleman celestial being arrived at the temple, Phra Vangisa who was an Arahat saw the glorious celestial being who exuded great personal radiance and wanted to converse with him. He asked for the Lord Buddha's permission to speak to the celestial being. After being granted permission, Phra Vangisa asked the celestial being how he came to possess such a spectacular celestial fortune. The celestial being paid homage to the Arahat before he gave him the following answer.

When I was a human being, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunities to listen to the Lord Buddha's sermons. I vowed to be a lay devotee and diligently observed the Five Precepts. I abstained from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech and from alcohol. I offered food and beverages to the monks and novices with respect and devotion. On every Holy Day, I observed the Eight Precepts. These accumulated good deeds caused me to be reborn in the Tavatimsa Realm and to possess this vast celestial fortune. After the conversation, the celestial being paid the Lord Buddha a deep homage and said his farewell to Phra Vangisa. He then returned to his celestial castle in the Tavatimsa Realm.

## **3.2 Upattham-bhaka-kamma (Supportive Kamma)**

### **3.2.1 The Meaning of Supportive Kamma**

Supportive Kamma is the Kamma which supports other type of Kamma in that it causes all the beings in the different planes of existence to experience suffering or happiness accordingly.

### **3.2.2 Characteristics of Supportive Kamma**

From its definition, Supportive Kamma is like a hero that helps each being to experience happiness or like a villain that adds salt to the wound by causing each being to experience more hardship and suffering. Supportive Kamma acts in concert with Reproductive Kamma in that it causes beings in different planes of existence to experience suffering or happiness in accordance with their overall Kamma. If Reproductive Kamma causes a being to have a good rebirth, the Supportive Kamma will work to increase its happiness. On the contrary, if Reproductive Kamma causes a being to have a bad rebirth, the Supportive Kamma will work to increase its suffering.

There are two categories of Supportive Kamma and include unwholesome Supportive Kamma and wholesome Supportive Kamma. A being's unwholesome Supportive Kamma can work to cause it to meet with a series of obstacles or disastrous events to make its life really miserable as shown in the following case study.

### **3.2.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka**

#### **The Hereafter of a Miserly Millionaire**

During the time of our Lord Buddha, there was a millionaire by the name of 'Ananda'. He was terribly mean and never once practiced generosity. Moreover, he did not observe the Precepts. His increasing wealth only went to make him even more miserly. He was determined to keep all of his wealth intact. He was so stingy that he spent very little on food and ate only poor quality food. The problem was he appeared to grow stingier and stingier with time.

Every two weeks, he would call his family members and relatives to meet so that he could remind them of how 800 millions were hardly a fortune. Therefore, they should be vigilant and never gave any of it out to beggars or ascetics with shaved heads because no advantages could be gained from giving them anything. To him, it was only a waste of money. He admonished them to constantly increase the family wealth by telling them that any dent made on their wealth would make them closer to losing their independence because one day their wealth would be all spent.

He drilled into them such teaching on a regular basis until he died. His miserliness became the Reproductive Kamma which caused him to have a rebirth in the womb of a beggar woman who lived in abject poverty in the community of beggars. Upon his conception, his Supportive Kamma caused the beggar community to suffer more and more hardship. What used to work for them no longer did and they met obstacles every step of the way. The beggars had to call a meeting to discuss the fact that in the past some of their members might have encountered obstacles from time to time but they had never before suffered such scarcity as a whole community. The love and unity of the community members had been replaced by irritation and annoyance. They concluded that someone of very ill fortune had to be among them.

1. To enable the student to correctly understand and explain the meaning, the characteristics, and the types of Kamma.
2. To enable the student to correctly understand and explain how each type of Kamma gives its consequences.
3. To enable the student to correctly understand and explain the logic behind the way each type of Kamma gives its consequences.

The members devised a way to find the person of ill fortune by dividing themselves into groups. A person of ill fortune would cause the group to experience scarcity while other groups would not. Finally, they found the person of ill fortune to be the woman in whose womb the former miserly millionaire had been conceived. She was subsequently cast out of the community. After she left, the community of beggars was able to receive alms as they used to do.

After the beggar woman left the community, her life took a downward turn. She had to wander from place to place until she gave birth to a male infant. The infant was terribly ugly. His mother raised him until he was old enough to be on his own. She then gave him an old begging bowl and left him to find a better life for herself.

After the mother and son parted company, the son wandered off to different places until one day he reached the house in which he used to live during his previous lifetime. He happened to be able to recall his past life so he walked into the house. When the residents of the house found the repulsive-looking beggar in the compound of their house, they were so affronted that they chased him out of the house and beat him until he fell unconscious.

The Lord Buddha happened to walk past the house at the time and saw the entire incident. He told the people at the house that the boy they had just beaten was indeed the rebirth form of the deceased millionaire, Ananda. The homeowners did not believe it so the Lord Buddha told the boy to recount his past life as the millionaire Ananda for them, and to lead them to the site where he had buried the treasures. No one else except for the millionaire Ananda knew about this site. As a result, Ananda's son came to believe in the Law of Kamma and the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

The unwholesome Kamma of the millionaire Ananda, which is miserliness, became a Supportive Kamma which caused him to suffer severe hardship in the subsequent rebirth as a beggar.

Wholesome supportive Kamma supports one's wholesome Kamma and causes one to meet with increasing success and happiness throughout one's life as exemplified in the following case study.

### **3.2.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka**

#### **The Past Kamma of the Senior Monk Phra Anuruddha**

Phra Anuruddha was one of the most important Arahats during the time of our Lord Buddha. He was one of the eighty foremost Arahats and was most accomplished in the area of 'Celestial Eye'. It was said that except during mealtimes, Phra Anuruddha could maintain his elevated meditative states and employed his 'Celestial Eye' to watch the comings and goings of different beings in all three spheres of existence. During the Lord Buddha's attainment of complete Nibbana, it was Phra Anuruddha who employed his 'Celestial Eye' to follow every step of the holy process.

Phra Anuruddha was a cousin of the Lord Buddha. He was the prince of a royalty by the name of 'Amitodana' of Kapilavastu City, the Lord Buddha's uncle. He had a brother born of the same mother by the name of 'Mahanama'. He possessed incalculable amount of merit which caused him to be high-born. Before becoming ordained as a Buddhist monk, he had enjoyed all forms of physical comfort and had never experienced any hardship or any want. He had no idea what 'no more' meant.

Once when Phra Anuruddha was still a child, there was an agreement among the children who were his playmates that whoever lost in a game would bring snacks for everyone else. Since he lost most of the time, his mother ended up having to provide so many snacks for all of his playmates. One time, his mother had an attendant tell him that there were no more snacks. Because of his life of plenty, he understood his mother to say that the snack was called 'no more' so he sent his attendant to fetch the 'no more' snacks. His mother wanted to teach him a lesson so she sent a covered gold platter with nothing inside it to him. But when he opened the cover, he found the platter to be filled with delicious snacks. The delicious snacks appeared by means of celestial powers which were manifested on his behalf as a result of his incalculable merit.

During one conversation with his royal cousins, the subject of the origin of rice was discussed. One boy said that rice came from the paddies. Another one said it came from the granary. Another one said it came from the rice pot. Young Anuruddha said it came from the plate. It goes to show that these boys had seen the work carried out in the rice paddies, all except for young Anuruddha. By the time he was a teenager, his parents had three castles built for him for each of the three seasons. Music played by female musicians echoed throughout the castle whenever he was in residence.

After his cousin Prince Siddhattha became enlightened as the Lord Buddha and returned to Kapilavastu City to teach His father King Suddhodana, the king held a meeting of all the royal members. He wanted each royal house to send a son so that they could be ordained as a Buddhist monk. Young Anuruddha was among the ones chosen. He studied meditation with the Most Venerable Sariputra, the Lord Buddha's Chief Disciple. Phra Anuruddha later attained the Arahatship and was honored by the Lord Buddha as being the most accomplished in the area of 'Celestial Eye'.



A long, long time ago during the time of the Lord Padumuttara Buddha, in that existence Phra Anuruddha was a very wealthy man and had the opportunity to listen to the Lord Padumuttara Buddha's sermons together with the masses. After one sermon, the Lord Padumuttara Buddha honored one particular monk as being the most accomplished in the area of 'Celestial Eye'. This caused Phra Anuruddha in that existence to feel a deep desire for the same honor some time in the future. He respectfully approached the Lord Padumuttara Buddha to request Him and 100,000 monks to receive food offering from him the following day. He had made great offerings for the entire seven days. On the seventh day, he made an offering of a very fine cloth to the Lord Padumuttara Buddha. He told the Lord Buddha that he had made all the offerings for the entire week with the hope that one day in the distant future he would be honored as being the most accomplished in the area of 'Celestial Eye' during the time of a future Buddha. The Lord Padumuttara employed the 'Buddha-Eye' to look into the future. The Lord Buddha found that the wealthy man's wish would indeed be fulfilled. The Lord Buddha gave the forecast that 100,000 Kappas into the future, there would happen a Buddha by the name of 'Gautama'. During the time of the Lord Gautama Buddha, the wealthy man would be honored as the most accomplished in the area of 'Celestial Eye' and his name would be 'Anuruddha'.

In that existence, he had accumulated only wholesome deeds throughout his entire life. After the Lord Padumuttara attained the complete Nibbana, the masses came together to build a gold Cetiya 112 kilometers high. The wealthy man worshipped the gold Cetiya with a large number of great and small torches. In this Kappa, Phra Anuruddha was once reborn in the time of the Lord Kassapa Buddha. After the Lord Kassapa Buddha attained the complete Nibbana, the masses came together to build a Cetiya 16 kilometers high, Phra Anuruddha in that existence had a large number of bronze vessels made. He put clarified butter and coils of wick in each vessel and placed the vessels side by side all around the Cetiya. He then had a large bronze vessel made and filled it with clarified butter and 1,000 coils of wick. He lit the wicks, placed the large vessel on his head and circumambulated the Cetiya all night long.

In another one of Phra Anuruddha's past existences, he was reborn during the time when the Lord Buddha was absent from the world. He was very poor and earned a living by hauling fresh grass. His name was 'Annabhara' and he shared accommodation with a wealthy man's attendant. He had the opportunity to offer alms to the Silent Buddha (Pacceka-buddha) by the name of 'Uparittha' who had just emerged from the bliss of deep meditation. The merit made gave its fruit almost instantly and caused a huge treasure trove to appear miraculously to him. He was later honored by the king to assume the position of millionaire by the name of 'Dhana the millionaire'. He had accumulated wholesome deeds for the rest of his life. After he died, he was reborn in the Celestial Realm and the Human Realm for countless times until he had his last rebirth as Prince Anuruddha.

All the wholesome deeds that Phra Anuruddha had accumulated in his past lifetimes serve as Supportive Kamma which caused him to be high-born, to become enlightened as an Arahant and to be the most accomplished in the area of 'Celestial Eye'.

### **3.3 Upapi-laka-kamma (Obstructive Kamma)**

#### **3.3.1 The Meaning of Obstructive Kamma**

**Obstructive Kamma** does its work by exerting an effect opposite to the other types of Kamma.

#### **3.3.2 Characteristics of Obstructive Kamma**

The above definition demonstrates that Obstructive Kamma exerts an effect opposite to Reproductive and Supportive Kamma. For example, if Reproductive Kamma causes an individual to be reborn under good circumstances, Supportive Kamma will aid the situation by making it even better but Obstructive Kamma will wreak havoc on the individual. On the contrary, if Reproductive Kamma causes a being to be reborn under poor circumstances, Supportive Kamma will add insult to injury but Obstructive Kamma will aid the individual by improving his/her situation.

There are two categories of Obstructive Kamma: unwholesome and wholesome. Unwholesome Obstructive Kamma works to decrease the being's happiness and success by causing it to receive suffering and loss as can be seen in the following case study.

#### **3.3.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka**

##### **Being Destined for the States of Loss and Woe Because of the Lack of Analytical Reflection (Yonisomanasikara)**

Once there was a man whose house was close to the temple. One evening as he was bathing at the landing by the river in front of his house, he saw a novice monk who was rowing by in a boat. He wanted to tease the novice monk so he began to splash the novice monk with water. The novice monk did not want to get wet and tried to duck the streams of water. His movements caused him to lose his balance and the small boat capsized. The novice monk swam toward the bank and hurled abusive remarks at the man, which made the man angry and he boxed the novice monk's ears a few times. He helped pull the novice monk out of the water and returned home feeling annoyed.

After the man died, he had undergone the round of rebirth for an incalculable amount of time until the time of our Lord Buddha. He was reborn as a human being in the royal family of 'Licchavi' by the name of 'Sunakkhatta'. After he grew up, he had the opportunity to listen to the Lord Buddha's sermons. His heart was filled with religious fervor and he requested to be ordained as a Buddhist monk. After his ordination, he wanted to practice meditation by first working on his concentration (Samatha). He wanted to attain the Jhanas before he continued with his insight development (Vipassana) where different levels of defilements can be removed and he could attain the different stages of holiness. As soon as the Lord Buddha gave him instruction on how to

develop his concentration, he began practicing meditation immediately. In a few days, he was able to attain the Jhanas as well as the Superknowledge of ‘Celestial Eye’.

His attainment of ‘Celestial Eye’ allowed him to penetrate the different realms of existence. He was filled with delight and felt the deepest respect for the Lord Buddha. He had the desire to continue practicing meditation until he could attain the Lokutara Realm but first he wanted to attain the next Superknowledge of ‘Celestial Ear’. The Lord Buddha gave him the instruction as requested but He did not give him any strategy because He knew about the monk’s Obstructive Kamma, which arose from the existence where he boxed the novice monk’s ears.

Phra Sunakkhatta practiced meditation by chanting a few words in his mind in order to attain ‘Celestial Ear’. But however hard he tried he could not attain the Superknowledge of ‘Celestial Ear’ because a particular Obstructive Kamma was giving its consequences. After three years of endeavoring, he still could not attain ‘Celestial Ear’. Later, his Obstructive Kamma caused him to have the perverted idea that the reason for his failure came from the fact that the Lord Buddha only knew about how to attain ‘Celestial Eye’ but not about how to attain ‘Celestial Ear’. He concluded that it was the reason why the Lord Buddha was still not coming forth with any more instruction. With this doubt in his mind, he continued to practice in the same way without making any progress. He soon became tired and concluded that the Lord Buddha had only attained the Superknowledge of ‘Celestial Eye’ but not other Superknowledges. He also concluded that the Lokutara Realm as well as Nibbana, which the Lord Buddha had been teaching about, did not exist. He further concluded that the Arahats who claimed to have attained enlightenment after the manner of the Lord Buddha could in fact attain ‘Celestial Eye’ only.

Finally, he abandoned Buddhism in order to look for higher knowledges in other religious beliefs. He subsequently disrobed and became a householder.

Later, he went searching for other great teachers and finally ended up in the office of ‘Nigaranathanatputra’, the leader of another religious belief. As a result of his ‘Wrong View’, after he died he was reborn in the Hell Realm.

Phra Sunakkhatta had so much faith in Buddhism that he decided to ordain as a Buddhist monk. He had endeavored to practice meditation but was not able to attain ‘Celestial Ear’ as he desired because of his previous unwholesome Kamma of boxing the novice monk’s ears in anger. This unwholesome Kamma showed up as Obstructive Kamma to prevent him from attaining ‘Celestial Ear’ even though he possessed sufficient merit to do it. Obstructive Kamma also caused him to have doubt and discouragement and to eventually leave the Buddhist Faith to pursue another religious belief.

Wholesome Obstructive Kamma does the duty of obstructing the work of unwholesome Kamma and causes the individual to experience happiness and success as shown in the following case study.

### **3.3.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Karma as Recorded in the Tripitaka**

#### **The Hereafter of an Executioner Who Had Faith**

During the time of our Lord Buddha, there was a very fierce-looking man. He had bulging yellow eyes. His hair was long and unkempt. He had a long red beard. He inspired fear in everyone that saw him. He did not have a job and did not do any work. One day he went into the woods to meet a gang of robbers. The head of the gang wanted to know his reason for being there and was told that the man wanted to join the gang. The head of the gang was well-versed in making predictions based on the individual's physical characteristics and could tell that the man was a beast of a person in that he was capable of cutting off his mother's breast and drinking blood from his father's throat.

As a result, the head robber decided not to let him join the gang. But the man did not give up; he hung around the robbers and waited on them until they were willing to beg the head robber to take him in. Eventually the head robber did not want to go against the wish of the gang members and reluctantly allowed the man to join his gang.

One day government officials tracked down the robbers and arrested all of them. Their crimes were such that they were sentenced to receive capital punishment. None of the government officials wanted to carry out the execution, however. Therefore, they made a bargain with the head robber. They offered him freedom if he would execute the rest of the robbers. The head robber refused the offer. The offer was made to every robber respectively but everyone turned it down except for the newest member of the gang. He was willing to execute the rest of the robbers in exchange for his freedom.

After the mass execution, he was set free as promised. Later, whenever mass execution had to be performed, this man would be called upon to do the nasty job.

The red-bearded executioner had continued to perform his work for payment for 55 long years. As he became older, he did not have enough strength to decapitate criminals with just one stroke but it took him a few strokes to do it. This caused the criminals to suffer horrifically before they died. Onlookers felt very bad for the criminals and requested the king to retire him and hire a younger, stronger man in his place.

On the morning of his retirement, he received a large amount of cash reward. As a result, he wanted to wear new clothes, put flowers behind his ears, and consumed an elaborate dish of rice pudding which he had yet to taste. He went to the market to buy what he wanted and gave his wife some money to buy what she needed in order to cook him a fine meal. Afterward, he went to the landing by the river to bathe and shave himself. Later, he put on his new clothes, sprinkled himself with scented water, and put flowers behind his ears. He went up the house and sat down to wait for the finest meal in his life.

On the same morning, Phra Sariputra just emerged from the bliss of deep meditation and considered whom he could save that morning. The image of the red-bearded man appeared to him and he could foresee that if he saved the man, the man would later receive tremendous wealth. Therefore, Phra Sariputra took his alms-bowl and appeared instantly at the man's door by supernormal powers. The man was just about to eat his food when he saw Phra Sariputra. He was filled with religious fervor and happiness. He reflected upon the fact that all his life he had decapitated so many criminals and never once did a wholesome deed but now was an excellent opportunity for him to do a good deed because Phra Sariputra had appeared at his doorstep. He wanted to offer his finest meal to the holy one.

He subsequently got up and went to where Phra Sariputra was standing. He went down on his hands and knees in front of Phra Sariputra and requested Phra Sariputra to come inside the house. He took the alms-bowl and filled it with the fine food. He gave the alms-bowl back to Phra Sariputra so that he could commence eating. With a heart filled with faith the man stood at one side to fan the monk while he was eating.

After the meal, Phra Sariputra rejoiced in the man's wholesome deed by giving him a sermon but the man's mind was elsewhere. Phra Sariputra asked him the reason for his absentmindedness and the man answered that he had committed a great number of unwholesome deeds by decapitating criminals. The memory prevented him from being able to concentrate on the Dhamma lecture. Phra Sariputra then asked him if he did the killing of his own volition or because it was his duty. He answered that he did it because it was his duty, for he had no desire to kill any one. Phra Sariputra then asked him if that was the case, would his killing still be considered an unwholesome deed. The man understood it not to be and he was then able to concentrate on the Dhamma lecture that Phra Sariputra was presenting to him. As a result, at the end of the sermon, the man was able to attain the First Stage of Holiness (Sotapanna). This miraculous event took place because the man was being aided by his wholesome Obstructive Kamma.

When Phra Sariputra realized that the man had attained the First Stage of Holiness, he bid the man farewell. The man accompanied Phra Sariputra halfway to the temple before he turned around to return home. On his way back, a Yakkhini (a female ogre) that was bound to him by ill-will from a past existence possessed a cow in the field and caused it to attack and gore the man to death. After he died, he was reborn as a gentleman celestial being in the Tusita Realm.

### **3.4 Upa-ghataka-kamma (Destructive Kamma)**

#### **3.4.1 The Meaning of Destructive Kamma**

**Destructive Kamma** works by having a canceling or destructive effect on other types of Kamma.

#### **3.4.2 Characteristics of Destructive Kamma**

Its characteristics can be compared to an archer who is about to shoot an arrow at a target which is 560 meters away but a man shows up and blocks the released arrow with a hammer and causes it to drop to the ground. The instant Destructive Kamma gives its consequences, it will completely stop the workings of other types of Kamma

Destructive Kamma is opposed to Reproductive and Supportive Kamma but supports Obstructive Kamma. For example, Reproductive Kamma causes an individual to be reborn in a wealthy family, to be smart and good looking. Supportive Kamma may cause him/her to be well-loved by many. Whatever he touches turns to gold, for example. In this case, his/her Destructive Kamma may cause him/her to meet with sudden disaster or death. On the contrary, if Reproductive Kamma causes an individual to be reborn in a poor family. Supportive Kamma may cause him/her to suffer increased hardship but as soon as his/her Destructive Kamma gives its consequences, his/her life will improve almost miraculously. For example, he/she may meet with sudden success or become famous overnight.

#### **3.4.3 Differences between Obstructive Kamma and Destructive Kamma**

As mentioned earlier, Obstructive Kamma does its work by exerting an effect opposite to other types of Kamma but the effect is gradual. For example, if unwholesome Obstructive Kamma is giving its consequences, it works to erode away the individual's wholesome Kamma by gradually causing him/her to experience a downward turn in his/her fortune but does not cut short his/her life.

On the other hand, Destructive Kamma works in a sudden manner. For example, if unwholesome Destructive Kamma is giving its consequences, it will work against the individual's wholesome Kamma by causing him/her to experience sudden bankruptcy or to suddenly lose everything he/she ever owns. Worst of all, it can cause the individual to die with a sad and gloomy state of mind and be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe although he/she has accumulated many good deeds earlier.

There are two categories of Destructive Kamma: wholesome and unwholesome. When one's unwholesome Destructive Kamma gives its consequences, it can completely destroy one's wholesome Kamma as can be seen in the following case study.

### **3.4.3 A Case Study in Unwholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka**

#### **The Story about King Ajatasattu**

King Ajatasattu is the son of King Bimbisara of the kingdom of Magadha. Magadha was one of the four largest and most powerful kingdoms during the time of our Lord Buddha. King Bimbisara had the deepest faith in the Lord Buddha and was a staunch supporter of Buddhism. Moreover, he was able to attain the First Stage of Holiness as a Sotapanna.

While the queen was pregnant with Ajatasattu, she had morning sickness and craved blood from her husband's arm. When she told her husband about it, King Bimbisara felt such loving-kindness for his unborn child that he was willing to cut his arm and collect his blood for his wife to drink. After she drank it, her sickness disappeared. King Bimbisara told the royal astrologers about the incident and wanted to know if it foretold something bad. The astrologers told the king that the unborn son would later be an enemy to the throne but the king did nothing about the situation.

The queen however upon hearing the astrologers' prediction had no wish for the pregnancy to continue. She tried a few methods to cause an abortion. When the king found out about it he forbade her to do it because he did not want her to commit a misdeed.

After the baby was born, King Bimbisara named him 'Ajatasattu'. While the prince was growing up, he kept the company of Phra Devadat who was an evil monk. He was jealous of the Lord Buddha because he did not receive as much gain and fame and was not regarded with great respect as other senior monks were. Worse, he meant the Lord Buddha harm because he had the perverted idea that once he removed the Lord Buddha he could just take over and rule the Buddhist monks in the place of the Lord Buddha.

Phra Devadat talked Prince Ajatasattu into killing his own father in order to take over the throne. Prince Ajatasattu agreed to do it and hid a Kris within his person when he went to see the king. However, he was acting so suspiciously that the ministers cornered him in order to question him. The ministers found out the truth and told the king about it. When King Bimbisara realized that his son wanted to kill him in order to ascend the throne, he willingly ceded the throne to him.

After King Ajatasattu assumed the throne, he went to see Phra Devadat and told him about what had happened. Phra Devadat insisted that King Ajatasattu kill his father anyway and King Ajatasattu went along with the evil monk's advice. King Ajatasattu had his father put in prison and did not allow anyone to visit him except for his mother. When he found out that his mother brought food for her husband in the prison, she was

forbidden to visit him again. Without food, King Bimbisara could still survive because he was nourished by the practice of walking meditation. When King Ajatasattu found this out, he had his barber use a sharp razor to cut the soles of King Bimbisara's feet and bathe them with saltwater. King Bimbisara could not stand the torture and eventually died.

Since the death of King Bimbisara, King Ajatasattu could not be happy again. The memory of his atrocious acts against his own father kept haunting him. Later, he had the opportunity to listen to the Dhamma given by the Lord Buddha. He was filled with faith in the Teachings. After the Lord Buddha attained Complete Nibbana, King Ajatasattu sponsored the grand council for the purpose of settling questions of doctrine and to fix the text of the Scriptures. He was a staunch supporter of Buddhism for the rest of his life. After he died he was reborn as a hell creature in the hell realm of 'Lohakumbhi' as a result of the Destructive Kamma of having committed patricide. It gave its ill consequences before the wholesome Kamma of supporting Buddhism can yield its fruit. He would receive horrific punishments in the Hell Realm for a long, long time to come.

On the contrary, when wholesome Destructive Kamma gives its consequences, it can completely destroy all the unwholesome Kamma which an individual has accumulated throughout his life as shown in the following case study.

### **3.4.4 A Case Study in Wholesome Kamma as Recorded in the Tripitaka**

#### **The Story about Phra Ongulimala**

Phra Ongulimala is one of the most important Arahats in Buddhism. He was the son of King Pasendikosala's royal advisor. King Pasendikosala ruled over the kingdom of Kosala. On the day of Ongulimala's birth, there was a supernormal event. All the weapons throughout the city lit up brightly. When asked by the king about the strange occurrence, the royal advisor said that the supernormal happening was caused by his infant's power. His infant was born under the astrological sign of criminals. When he grew up, he would be a very dangerous criminal and wreak havoc on the inhabitants of the kingdom. He requested the king to have his infant killed but the king did not see any threat from the infant and allowed the royal advisor to keep and raise him.

The royal advisor named his son 'Ahinsaka' which meant 'no aggression'. After 'Ahinsaka' grew up, his father sent him to learn the arts in the city of 'Takasila', which was the center for learning during the time of our Lord Buddha. 'Ahinsaka' was highly intelligent and well-behaved. He was an astute student and well-loved by the master. As a favorite of the master, he incurred the jealousy of his fellow classmates. They conspired with each other to make the master become suspicious and ultimately fearful of 'Ahinsaka'. Initially the master ignored these students' false stories but with time and increasingly convincing schemes, the master came to believe that 'Ahinsaka' really meant him harm. The master thought about getting rid of 'Ahinsaka' by borrowing someone else's hands.



Once the master thought up a plan, he called 'Ahinsaka' to him and lied to him that all the knowledge which he possessed had already been passed on to 'Ahinsaka' except for one more subject, which was the ultimate knowledge. He told 'Ahinsaka' that to learn this last subject, he would have to kill 1,000 people. Although 'Ahinsaka' had never taken a life before given his family background of piety, his thirst for knowledge made him believe his master's lie. He subsequently took up a weapon and went to lie in wait for his victims in the forest. To keep count of the number of people he had killed, he would cut off a finger from each murdered victim and wore the severed fingers around his neck after they were dried in the sun. As a result, he became known as 'the villain Ongulimala'.

'Ongulimala' killed so many people in the forest that eventually no one dared go into the forest. 'Ongulimala' had to ambush people in the villages instead. After more and more people had been killed, the villagers had to abandon their homes and move into the city of 'Savatthi', which was the capital city of the kingdom of 'Kosala'. They eventually made their plight known to the king.

The king had already been aware of the situation but with increasing complaints from the villagers, he decided that it was time to capture 'Ongulimala'. The royal advisor told his wife about the planned arrest. She became very unhappy and fearful for her son's life. She intended to go into the forest to warn him. On the same morning, the Lord Buddha was as usual employing the 'Buddha-Eye' to see whom He could save that day and the image of 'Ongulimala' appeared to Him. The Lord Buddha knew that if 'Ongulimala' heard the Dhamma lecture from Him, he would want to become ordained as a monk and would later become an Arahat. But if 'Ongulimala' killed his mother first, the grave unwholesome Kamma of matricide would prevent him from realizing the Dhamma.

The Lord Buddha went immediately to the forest. As soon as 'Ongulimala' saw the Lord Buddha, he raised his sword and ran after Him. With Buddha-Power, the Lord Buddha made it impossible for 'Ongulimala' to catch up with Him no matter how fast or how long he ran. Finally, in exhaustion, he asked the Lord Buddha to stop. The Lord Buddha answered that He had already stopped but it was 'Ongulimala' who was still moving. In exasperation, he said that the Lord Buddha was lying. Therefore, the Lord Buddha explained to him that He had been emancipated from birth, aging, pain, and death. He would no longer undergo the round of rebirth or Samsara which meant that He had already stopped. 'Ongulimala' however was bestial and had killed so many people and would most definitely be reborn in the Hell Realm as a result of his unwholesome Kamma. He would continue to undergo the never ending suffering of the round of rebirth.

The Lord Buddha's words reminded 'Ongulimala' that the person conversing with him had to be Prince Siddhattha, who had become enlightened as the Lord Buddha. Ongulimala's wholesome Destructive Kamma gave its consequences in time to make him a believer. He threw away his sword, walked toward the Lord Buddha, bowed low at His feet, and asked to become ordained as a Buddhist monk. The Lord Buddha checked and saw that during Ongulimala's past existences, he had made offerings of necessary items to

Buddhist monks who practiced righteousness; therefore, he could receive the very special and supernormal ordination of ‘Ehibhikkhu-upasampada’.

After the villain ‘Ongulimala’ became a Buddhist monk, he had to perform monastic duties. He went on his alms-round in the city but the people were terrified of him and no one would offer him any food. Moreover, they threw stones and sticks at him. Therefore, he returned to the temple with an empty alms-bowl and sustained injury everyday. The people were still angry with him for having killed their relatives. As time passed; however, people began to forgive and forget and started to make food offerings to Phra Ongulimala. Later, he continued practicing meditation until he was able to attain the Arahatsip.

In this case, the wholesome Destructive Kamma of the villain ‘Ongulimala’ gave its consequences immediately when he heard the Lord Buddha’s words and decided to become ordained as a monk. The vast amount of his past accumulated merit caused him to eventually attain the Arahatsip. As a result, he was able to escape the unwholesome Kamma of killing so many people.

The term ‘Kicca-catu-kaka’ means Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of duty. If Reproductive Kamma is compared to an elder brother then Supportive Kamma is the little brother who listens to the elder brother and Obstructive Kamma and Destructive Kamma are the little brothers who have a mind of their own and refuse to obey the big brother. Obstructive Kamma disobeys in a gradual manner whereas Destructive Kamma does it in a sudden and straight-forward manner.

Reproductive Kamma determines the individual’s realm of rebirth while Supportive Kamma enhances the effect of Reproductive Kamma. If Reproductive Kamma causes an individual to have a good rebirth then Supportive Kamma will make the good circumstances of his birth even better. Obstructive and Destructive Kamma will have an opposite effect. If Reproductive Kamma causes the individual to have a good rebirth in a wealthy family, Obstructive and Destructive Kamma will cause the individual to be sickly, to be unable to spend his/her fortune, to be unhappy, etc. Obstructive Kamma is more like a disease which gradually weakens the body until it finally expires. Destructive Kamma is more like a sudden accident which ends the individual’s life or a sudden financial disaster which causes him to go bankrupt. It can also wreak havoc on both fronts at the same time.

It is very important that we do not live life in a reckless manner but should accumulate as much merit as we can and as often as possible. We should make it a habit to recall all the merit that we have made and keep our mind clear and bright. In this way, we can prevent our unwholesome Kamma to give its ill consequences but allow our wholesome Kamma to work all the time so that our success and happiness can be increased until such time that we can rid ourselves completely of all defilements and attain Nibbana in the manner of the Lord Buddha and the Arahats.

## **Exercises**

After the student finishes studying Chapter 3, the student should complete the test and exercises 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 in the workbook before beginning Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4

# THE SECOND CATEGORY OF KAMMA: KAMMA WHICH GIVES ITS CONSEQUENCES AS A FUNCTION OF STRENGTH

### Topics Covered in Chapter 4

#### **4.1 Garuka-kamma (Strong-Effect-Producing Kamma)**

- 4.1.1 The Meaning of Garuka-kamma
- 4.1.2 Characteristics of Garuka-kamma
- 4.1.3 Unwholesome Garuka-kamma
- 4.1.4 Wholesome Garuka-kamma

#### **4.2 Asanna-kamma (Death-Proximate Kamma)**

- 4.2.1 The Meaning of Asanna-kamma
- 4.2.2 Characteristics of Asanna-kamma
- 4.2.3 Unwholesome Asanna-kamma
- 4.2.4 Wholesome Asanna-kamma

#### **4.3 Acinna-kamma (Habitual Kamma)**

- 4.3.1 The Meaning of Acinna-kamma
- 4.3.2 Characteristics of Acinna-kamma
- 4.3.3 Unwholesome Acinna-kamma
- 4.3.4 Wholesome Acinna-kamma

#### **4.4 Katatta-kamma (Casual Kamma)**

- 4.4.1 The Meaning of Katatta-kamma
- 4.4.2 Characteristics of Katatta-kamma
- 4.4.3 Unwholesome Katatta-kamma
- 4.4.4 Wholesome Katatta-kamma

## **Concepts**

1. Our individual Kamma, besides doing its work according to its different duties, also works as a function of strength. Kamma which is more potent be it wholesome or unwholesome will give its consequences first.
2. Studying the Law of Kamma from real life stories that occurred during the time of our Lord Buddha as recorded in the Tripitaka is very important because it allows us to understand the consequences of Kamma better by comparing the theoretical part to what actually happens in real life.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to understand and correctly describe the meaning, the characteristics, and the types of Garuka-kamma, Asanna-kamma, Acinna-kamma, and Katatta-kamma.
2. To enable the student to understand and compare the different types of Kamma as well as their respective consequences.
3. To enable the student to analyze the stories in the Tripitaka and how they match the theory of the Law of Kamma.

## **THE SECOND CATEGORY OF KAMMA: KAMMA WHICH GIVES ITS CONSEQUENCES AS A FUNCTION OF STRENGTH**

The student has already learnt by now that Kamma works to make us uniquely different and our overall Kamma depends on our past and current deeds. We may sometimes hear about a certain individual that has had a good life when for some reasons, he begins to suddenly experience one problem after another sort of like **‘when it rains, it pours’**. He goes from being a millionaire to being a poor person. Or we may hear of a person who has been poor all of his life when for some reasons he meets with unexpected prosperity. Our lives can indeed change very dramatically and quickly at times. When our overall wholesome Kamma has been nearly exhausted and no new wholesome deeds are being accumulated in the present, this situation can cause our past unwholesome Kamma to give its consequences quite suddenly. But if we had accumulated a vast amount of wholesome deeds in our past lifetime(s) and we continue to regularly accumulate wholesome deeds in the present lifetime, it will be difficult for our past unwholesome deeds to give its consequences.

Our overall wholesome and unwholesome Kamma follows us everywhere like a shadow. If anyone is unwary and reckless in the way he lives his life, he can easily commits unwholesome deeds. If the unwholesome Kamma is very grave, it will give its consequences with a real force when the time comes. A comfortable life can turn into a life plagued with all kinds of problems. Or if one dies, one will suffer horrific forms of punishment in the States of Loss and Woe for an unimaginably long time. Knowledge of the Law of Kamma should help us to live our lives carefully so that we will not make the mistake of committing any misdeed.

In this chapter, we will concentrate on the category of Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of strength. For this category of Kamma, one rule applies: Kamma which is more potent will give its consequences faster. This applies to both wholesome and unwholesome Kamma regardless of when it is performed. That is, if the Kamma is potent but performed later, it can still give its consequences earlier. It means that the speed and the order with which Kamma gives its consequences depend on its potency or strength. The order in which different types of Kamma give their consequences is automatically in place and needs no aid from any outside agent. Our different Kamma knows to arrange itself accordingly and in the right order.

The Pali term for this category of Kamma is **‘Pakadana-pariyaya-catukaka’** and include **‘Garuka-kamma’** (strong-effect-producing Kamma); **‘Asanna-kamma’** (death-proximate Kamma); **‘Acinna-kamma’** (habitual Kamma); and **‘Katatta-kamma’** (casual Kamma). The speeds with which they give their consequences are as follows.

## **4.1 Garuka-kamma (Strong-Effect-Producing Kamma)**

### **4.1.1 The Meaning of Garuka-kamma**

**Garuka-kamma** means very grave or very potent Kamma. It can give its consequences first and other types of Kamma can never block its way.

### **4.1.2 Characteristics of Garuka-kamma**

Garuka-kamma is the gravest or most potent Kamma. It has the strongest force and will give its consequences before any other types of Kamma. No other types of Kamma can ever compete with it because they are less potent and have less force. Only Garuka-kamma can vie with each other but still the more potent Garuka-kamma will always dominate and the less potent Garuka-kamma will serve to support its more potent counterpart. In the absence of the most potent Garuka-kamma, the less potent Garuka-kamma will give its consequences on its own.

There are two types of Garuka-kamma: unwholesome and wholesome. Unwholesome Garuka-kamma will definitely give its consequences in the next existence by causing the individual to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. In the same manner, wholesome Garuka-kamma will definitely give its consequences by causing the individual to be reborn in the States of Happiness. Garuka-kamma cannot be overridden by other types of Kamma.

### 4.1.3 Unwholesome Garuka-kamma

There are two types of unwholesome Garuka-kamma as follows.

1. **Nitaya-micchaditthi-kamma:** It means having terribly wrong views. For example, one believes that Kamma has no consequences and there are no such things as good and bad deeds, merit and demerit. Nitaya-micchaditthi-kamma is further divided into three subtypes as follows:
  - 1.1 **Natthika-ditthi:** It means having the wrong view that good and bad deeds have no consequences. During the time of the Lord Buddha, a man called 'Acita-kesa-kampala' was the leader of this particular belief. He negated human deeds by teaching that good and bad deeds had nothing to do with human happiness or suffering.
  - 1.2 **Ahetuka-ditthi:** It means having the wrong view that life as it stands is not caused by anything. During the time of the Lord Buddha, a man called 'Makkhali-gosala' was the leader of this particular belief. He taught the view that the differences seen among human beings happened by chance and had nothing to do with the consequences of their past Kamma.
  - 1.3 **Akiriya-ditthi:** It means having the wrong view that one's deeds do not result in merit and demerit. During the time of the Lord Buddha, a man called 'Purana-kassapa' was the leader of this particular belief. He taught that there were no such things as merit and demerit.
2. **Ananta-riya-kamma:** It means very grave unwholesome Kamma that will definitely give its consequences after one dies and can never be avoided. Ananta-riya-kamma is divided into five categories as follows:
  - 2.1 **Matu-ghata** or matricide.
  - 2.2 **Pitu-ghata** or patricide.
  - 2.3 **Arahata-ghata** or killing an Arahant.
  - 2.4 **Lohi-tupapada** or causing the Lord Buddha to sustain a bruise.
  - 2.5 **Sangha-bheda** or causing dissension among the Buddhist monks.



## 2.1 **Matu-ghata** or matricide (see details in 2.2)

## 2.2 **Pitu-ghata** or patricide

**Matricide and patricide** apply only to one's birth mother and birth father and do not apply to foster parents or adopted parents. Matricide and patricide are considered to be Ananta-riya-kamma even when the killer does not know that he is killing his birth mother or birth father.

If one hires someone else to kill his birth mother or birth father, one will still receive the consequences of Ananta-riya-kamma. The hired killer will receive the consequences of killing a human being but not the consequences of Ananta-riya-kamma. Ananta-riya-kamma only applies to human beings.

### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka Phra Maha-Moggalana's Past-Life Kamma**

In one of Phra Maha-Moggalana's past existences, he was a man living in the city of Benares. He worked to support himself and his parents and took good care of them. Later, his parents felt bad that he had to work so hard and discussed with him the matter of finding him a wife. After having refused to be married a few times, he finally gave in to his parents' request and married the woman of their choice.

Just a few days after they were married, the woman came up with a scheme to make her husband misunderstand his parents by littering the house with food and other personal items. When the husband returned from work and asked her who did the littering, she told him that it was his parents. Initially the husband did not believe it but the woman continued to litter the house regularly and finally convinced her husband to believe that his parents were becoming a real problem. He finally found a way to get rid of them by pretending to take them to see some relatives. Once they reached the forest, he got out of the carriage and left his parents alone. He then dressed like a robber and returned to beat his parents to death in spite of the fact that throughout the heinous act, his parents were yelling for their son to run for his life. He left their bodies deep in the forest.

After he died, he was reborn in the hell of Aveci and received horrific forms of punishment there for hundreds of thousands of hell years. During his subsequent rebirths as a human being, he was beaten to death for hundreds of lifetimes. In his final rebirth, he was able to attain Arahatsip. Even then he was beaten to death by a group of robbers before he attained Nibbana.

Phra Maha-Moggalana's Ananta-riya-kamma of matricide and patricide was such a grave and forceful Kamma that it caused him to be in the hell of Aveci for an unimaginably long time. It also caused him to be beaten to death hundreds of lifetimes during his subsequent rebirths as a human being up until his final lifetime.

### **2.3 Arahata-ghata** or killing an Arahata

**The killing of an Arahata** before or after his ordination as a Buddhist monk is considered Ananta-riya-kamma. The killing may be intentional or unintentional, it may be carried out by oneself or by hiring someone else to do it, if it results in the Arahata's death, the person is considered to have committed Ananta-riya-kamma. The killing of individuals that have attained other stages of holiness such as Ana-gamis, Sakida-gamis, Sotapannas, though serious is not considered to be Ananta-riya-kamma. Ananta-riya-kamma only applies when both the killer and the Arahata are human beings. If the killer is an animal, it is not considered to be Ananta-riya-kamma. If the Arahata is a celestial being or a Yakkha but the killer is a human being, the unwholesome deed is not considered to be Ananta-riya-kamma.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka 500 Believers of Another Religious Faith and 500 Robbers**

Once during the time of the Lord Buddha, believers of another religious faith called a meeting because the number of their followers as well as the number of offerings being made to them were declining but those of the Lord Buddha's were increasing. They came to the conclusion that the cause was Phra Maha-Moggalana. They decided to hire a group of robbers to kill him.

The said robbers went to surround Phra Maha-Moggalana's abode but given his great supernormal powers, he could escape harm every time. But when Phra Maha-Moggalana checked his past lives' Kamma, he found that he had committed Anantariya-kamma in one of his past lifetimes. As a result, Phra Maha-Moggalana allowed the robbers to beat him until his bones were crushed into small pieces. These believers of another religious faith and the robbers were finally caught and sentenced to death. They subsequently had a rebirth in the hell realm of Aveci for the crime of killing an Arahata and would serve their sentence there for an unimaginably long time.

### **2.4 Lohitu-papada** or causing the Lord Buddha to sustain a bruise

Our Lord Buddha's body is considered to be 'Abhe-dakaya', which means that while the Lord Buddha is alive, no weapons or assaults can ever cause any of His organs to suffer injury such as cuts or open wounds. The Lord Buddha's body can be cut only with His express permission as in a surgical process. Otherwise, the most that can happen to the Lord Buddha's body is a bruise. Therefore, anyone who causes the Lord Buddha to sustain a bruise is considered to have committed 'Lohitu-papada'.

### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka Phra Devadat Committed Lohitu-papada**

Phra Devadat had formed a bond of ill-will with the Lord Buddha beginning in an existence far into the past. This bond had lasted hundreds of thousand lifetimes. During the time of the Lord Buddha, Prince Devadat had faith in Buddhism and requested to be ordained as a Buddhist monk. After a period of meditation practice, he was able to achieve a low level of meditative attainments which allowed him to have some supernormal powers. The bond of ill-will deep within him eventually caused him to perversely want to overthrow the Lord Buddha and rule the Buddhist monks himself.

On one occasion he talked Prince Ajatasattu into climbing up to the top of a mountain and picking out a huge rock while he waited for the Lord Buddha to walk pass. As soon as he saw the Lord Buddha, he dislocated the rock and let it roll downward toward the Lord Buddha. At that moment, two big slabs miraculously emerged from the ground and bent their tops together to break the impact of the rock and caused it to splinter. One small piece of the splintered rock hit the Lord Buddha's heel and caused it to bruise.

This was how Phra Devadat committed Lohitu-papada, which is a very grave unwholesome Kamma. After the incident, the physician 'Jivaka' had to cut the skin around the bruise with a surgical knife in order to let the blood out and release the pressure. In this case, the physician did not commit Lohitu-papada.

## **2.5 Sangha-bheda or causing dissension among the Buddhist monks**

Sangha-bheda or causing dissension among the Buddhist monks is considered to be a very grave unwholesome Kamma and applies only when the one causing the dissension is also a Buddhist monk. If the culprit is a novice monk or a lay person, it is not considered to be Anantariya-kamma but it is still considered a grave unwholesome Kamma.

To qualify as Sangha-bheda, five factors must be met. If a Buddhist monk causes other Buddhist monks to quarrel and fight with one another or to feel annoyed with each other, this is considered an unwholesome deed but not Sangha-bheda. Sangha-bheda must contain the following five factors:

- 1. Kammena:** A Buddhist monk causes other Buddhist monks to believe his words and persuades them to leave the monastic order with him to perform Sangha-kamma (A ceremony performed by a chapter of Buddhist monks assembled in solemn conclave) as a separate order.

**2. Uddesena:** A Buddhist monk causes other Buddhist monks to believe his words and persuades them to leave the monastic order with him to recite ‘Patimokkha’ (‘The Fundamental Precepts’) as a separate order.

**3. Vo-ha-ranto:** There are 18 acts involved in causing dissension.

1. Saying what is not Dhamma as being Dhamma.
2. Saying what is Dhamma as not being Dhamma.
3. Saying what is not Discipline as being Discipline.
4. Saying what is Discipline as not being Discipline.
5. Saying what the Lord Buddha did not say as being what He said.
6. Saying what the Lord Buddha said as not being what He said.
7. Saying what the Lord Buddha did not do as being what He did.
8. Saying what the Lord Buddha did as being what He did not do.
9. Saying a disciplinary rule which the Lord Buddha legislated as something He did not legislate.
10. Saying a disciplinary rule which the Lord Buddha did not legislate as something He legislated.
11. Saying what is not an offence as being one.
12. Saying what is an offence as not being one.
13. Saying a light offence as being a serious offence.
14. Saying a serious offence as being a light offence.
15. Saying a correctable offence as being uncorrectable.
16. Saying an uncorrectable offence as being correctable.
17. Saying a vulgar offence as not being a vulgar offence.
18. Saying a non-vulgar offence as being a vulgar offence.

4. **Anusa-vanena:** A Buddhist monk whispers into the Buddhist monks' ears in order to make them fall for his words and to follow his order, which is separate from the Lord Buddha's monastic order.
5. **Sala-kagga-hena:** A Buddhist monk deceives other Buddhist monks by having them draw lots in order to convince them that they should leave the monastic order and join him.

A Buddhist monk intentionally commits Sangha-bheda when he completes the above five acts. When other Buddhist monks that possess poor intellect fall for his words, which are distorted from those of the Lord Buddha's and leave the monastic order to join his order to perform Sangha-kamma separately, the monk is said to have caused dissension. This monk has committed Sangha-bheda, which is a very grave unwholesome Kamma.

Should the same scenario occur but the other Buddhist monks are still believers and worshippers of the Lord Buddha and practice according to the Dhamma-Discipline but leave to live on their own as a result of a quarrel. In this case, the culprit monk has not committed Sangha-bheda.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka Phra Devadat Committed Sangha-bheda**

Prince Devadat had faith in Buddhism and became ordained along with seven other princes from the 'Sakkaya House'. Phra Devadat eventually achieved a low level of meditative attainments which caused him to have some supernormal powers. He wanted gain and fame and had the perverse thought of replacing the Lord Buddha. He approached young Prince Ajatasattu and displayed his supernatural powers to the young prince to impress and convert him.

Once Phra Devadat succeeded in recruiting Prince Ajatasattu, he approached the Lord Buddha and asked for permission to rule the Buddhist monks in His place. Phra Devadat was admonished by the Lord Buddha and it caused him to feel vengeful and he had later tried different ways to assassinate the Lord Buddha: He talked Prince Ajatasattu into sending an official to assassinate the Lord Buddha. A mad elephant named 'Nalagiri' was released for the purpose of harming and killing the Lord Buddha. A huge rock was dislodged to hurt and kill the Lord Buddha and caused Him to sustain a bruise. Yet, nothing could kill the Lord Buddha.

Phra Devadat decided to recruit some Buddhist monks such as Phra Kokalika. He wanted to commit Sangha-bheda by deliberately asking the Lord Buddha to legislate five new practices<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These include: 1) All monks must live in the woods. Any monk who lives in town will be punished, 2) All monks must beg for alms. Any monk who receives lay supporters' invitation for a meal will be punished, 3.) All monks must robe themselves with rag robes. Any monk who receives new robes from lay supporters will be punished, 4) All monks must live under a tree. Any monk who seeks shelter will be punished, and 5) All monks must not consume fish and meat. Any monk who eats fish and meat will be punished.

under the pretense that he wanted to practice renunciation in a more rigorous manner knowing fully well that the Lord Buddha would not do it. When the Lord Buddha refused his request, he took the opportunity to use the refusal to cause a dissension among the Buddhist monks. The ignorant ones agreed with Phra Devadat but the wise ones criticized his action.

When the situation was known to the Lord Buddha, He tried to dissuade Phra Devadat from committing Sangha-bheda. But it was useless, since Phra Devadat was determined to do it. On one Buddhist Holy Day, Phra Devadat announced in the midst of the Buddhist monks of his wicked intention and he had the monks draw lots to see who would side with him. It turned out that the 'Vajjiputra' monks who had just been ordained believed Phra Devadat and all 500 of them followed him to live at a place called 'Gayasisa'. The Lord Buddha asked His two Chief Disciples Phra Sariputra and Phra Maha-Moggalana to bring the 500 monks back, which they did. Moreover, they were able to make the monks gain right understanding about the monastic order.

When Phra Devadat heard about it, he was so filled with anger that hot blood spurted out of his mouth. Later, he did feel remorseful and went to see the Lord Buddha but before he reached his destination, the ground opened up and pulled him down to the hell realm of Aveci.

Phra Devadat was perversely ambitious and wanted to rule over the Buddhist monks. He recruited the help of Prince Ajatasattu in an effort to assassinate the Lord Buddha but when he was unsuccessful, he decided to commit Sangha-bheda and led a group of monks to form a separate order. His action was considered to be Ananta-riya-kamma. It caused him to be pulled toward the hell realm of Aveci to serve a horrific sentence there for an unimaginably long time.

Out of the five categories of Ananta-riya-kamma which include Matu-ghata or matricide, Pitu-ghata or patricide, Arahata-ghata or killing an Arahata, Lohitu-papada or causing the Lord Buddha to sustain a bruise, and Sangha-bheda or causing dissension among the Buddhist monks, the first four categories can be committed by both lay people and Buddhist monks but the last category can be committed by Buddhist monks only.

If anyone commits all five categories of Ananta-riya-kamma, after he dies, Sangha-bheda will send its consequences first. It will cause him to receive horrific forms of punishment in the hell realm of Aveci for the rest of the Kappa.

The gravity of these five categories of Anantariya-kamma differs in the following order: Sangha-bheda > Lohitu-papada > Arahata-ghata > Matu-ghata and Pitu-ghata.

All five categories of Ananta-riya-kamma result in a rebirth in the hell realm of Aveci. In the case where matricide (Matu-ghata) and patricide (Pitu-ghata) are committed, the gravity of the consequences differs according to the following scenarios:

1. Pitu-ghata will send its consequences first if the father had observed the Precepts but the mother had not.
2. Matu-ghata will send its consequences first if the mother had observed the Precepts but the father had not.
3. Matu-ghata will send its consequences first if both parents had observed the Precepts.
4. Matu-ghata will send its consequences first if both parents did not observe the Precepts.

According to the Teachings, a mother is considered to have done more for her child since she carries it in her womb and gives birth to it. She also raises it until it can help itself.

#### **4.1.4 Wholesome Garuka-kamma**

**Wholesome Garuka-kamma** means great wholesome Kamma that earns tremendous merit. It is referred to as Mahag-gata-kusala and is divided into nine categories. They include five categories of Form-Kusala and four categories of Non-Form Kusala. Mahag-gata-kusala arises from meditative attainments.

Mahag-gata-kusala will send its consequences before any other types of Kamma. Meditation practice allows one to attain the Jhanas and the attainment of the Jhanas causes the practitioner to have a rebirth in the Brahma Realm right after his death. The individual may have committed a great deal of unwholesome deeds in the past but these unwholesome deeds cannot compete with the power of Mahag-gata-kusala.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka The King Who Attained the Jhanas**

A long, long time ago, there was a king of the city of Benares. On one occasion during his reign, five Silent Buddhas (Pacceka-budhas) traversed the air to the city gate of Benares in order to bless the people by accepting their alms. They went on their alms-round until they reached the palace gate. The king felt deeply impressed with the Silent Buddhas and requested them to have a meal at the palace. After the meal, the king asked the Silent Buddhas about the harm of sensual pleasures.

After the Silent Buddhas gave him a Dhamma lecture, the king praised the Silent Buddhas for having ordained and lived the life of renunciation. He made an offering of robes and medicine to the Silent Buddhas. After the Silent Buddhas rejoiced in his merit, they traversed the air back to Mount Nandamullaka.

From that time onward, the king gradually became bored with material things and decided to start practicing meditation. He practiced meditation by focusing on an object until he was able to attain the Jhanas. His wife wanted to know the reason for his boredom so the king gave the queen a Dhamma lecture about the harm of sensual pleasures. After the sermon, the king decided to abdicate and appointed his ministers to look after the affairs of the land in his place. He traveled to the Himavanta Forest and ordained as a Yogi. After he died, he had a rebirth in the Brahma Realm.

The King of Benares felt deeply impressed with the Silent Buddhas. After they gave him a Dhamma lecture, he felt bored with material things because he could understand the harm of sensual pleasures. He had endeavored to practice meditation until he attained the Jhanas, which earned him wholesome Garuka-kamma. The great power of Garuka-kamma caused him to be reborn in the Brahma Realm after he died.

## **4.2 Asanna-kamma (Death-Proximate Kamma)**

### **4.2.1 The Meaning of Asanna-kamma**

**Asanna-kamma** is wholesome and unwholesome deeds that are performed soon before death or wholesome and unwholesome deeds that are recalled just before death.

### **4.2.2 Characteristics of Asanna-kamma**

Asanna-kamma is second to Garuka-kamma in terms of strength. It means that when an individual has not performed wholesome or unwholesome Garuka-kamma, it is Asanna-kamma that will give its consequences first after he dies. But if the individual possesses Garuka-kamma, after it gives its consequences, Asannakamma will be next in line to give its consequences. The speed with which Asannakamma gives its consequence is not dependent on its level or amount. It is like the cows which have been kept in the corral, once the fence is opened, the cow closest to the fence at the time will be the first one out. It does not matter whether it is old and weak or young and strong. Whatever deeds or Kamma that an individual can recall just before death will give its consequences first regardless of the presence of other types of past unwholesome or wholesome Kamma.

There are two types of Asanna-kamma: unwholesome Asanna-kamma and wholesome Asanna-kamma. Unwholesome Asanna-kamma will lead one to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe after one dies. On the contrary, wholesome Asanna-kamma will lead one to be reborn in the States of Happiness after one dies.



### 4.2.3 Unwholesome Asanna-kamma

**Unwholesome Asanna-kamma** means unwholesome deeds which lead one to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka Having a Rebirth as a Naga Because of His Unwholesome Asanna-Kamma**

During the time of the Lord Buddha Kassapa, there was a young lay devotee who had the desire to leave the suffering of the round of rebirth. He gave away all of his possessions and became ordained as a Buddhist monk. He diligently practiced meditation. One day, he wanted to go look for a suitable place that would be conducive to his meditation practice. He had to travel by boat in order to get to his destination. Unfortunately, during the ride his hand accidentally got tangled in some vegetation and as the boat moved, the vegetation was uprooted. He realized that he had just transgressed the Dhamma-Discipline by having caused the vegetation to be uprooted. It was necessary for him to recognize his transgression according to the Dhamma-Discipline but he did not do it thinking it was only a minor transgression.

After he found the location he wanted, he devoted himself to meditation practice for a total of 20,000 years. Yet, he could not realize the Dhamma. As the time of his death approached, he recalled the incident about the uprooted vegetation and became very worried about this transgression. Unfortunately that was his last thought before he died. As a result, this unwholesome Asanna-kamma led him to be reborn as a Phya Naga king by the name of 'Erakapatta'.

### 4.2.4 Wholesome Asanna-kamma

**Wholesome Asanna-kamma** means wholesome deeds which lead one to be reborn in the States of Happiness after one dies.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka The Hereafter of Matthakundali**

During the time of our Lord Buddha, there was a Brahmin in the city of Savatthi. He was a miserly man and would never give anyone anything so the people called him '**Adinnapubbaka**'. He had an only child. Although he loved his son dearly, when he wanted to give his son some jewelry, his miserliness caused him to make the jewelry himself by fashioning two simple earrings from gold. So the people called the young man '**Matthakundali**' which meant **simple earrings**.

When Matthakundali was 16 years old, he was afflicted by an illness which made him thin and sallow. The Brahmin's wife told her husband to fetch a physician but being miserly he went to ask for a formula from the physician so that he could prepare the medication himself. But the medication made his son's symptoms worse so this time the Brahmin went to fetch the physician. By then, it was too late and the physician could not do anything to help the young man.

As the young man's condition grew worse, the Brahmin moved him to the front porch because he did not want anyone visiting his sick son to see his possessions inside the house. Near dawn one morning, the Lord Buddha had just emerged from the bliss of deep meditation and checked to see whom he would save on that day. The image of Matthakundali appeared to Him. The Lord Buddha immediately appeared at the front door of the Brahmin's house. At the time, Matthakundali was lying down and facing the house. The Lord Buddha exuded His personal radiance once to make the young man wonder what the light was. He turned toward the light and saw the Lord Buddha. Since his father had never taken him to see the Lord Buddha, to listen to the Dhamma lectures, or to make an offering of alms to the Buddhist monks, Matthakundali never had the opportunity to pay homage to the Lord Buddha. Since he was so weak that he could not raise his hands or do anything to pay homage to the Lord Buddha, he did so in his mind. After the Lord Buddha left, the young man died. He was reborn in the Tavatimsa Realm as a gentleman celestial being having a celestial castle standing 390 kilometers high.

Matthakundali never gave alms or listened to any Dhamma lecture given by the Lord Buddha but he had a firm belief in the Lord Buddha just before his death. It was this wholesome Asanna-kamma that caused him to have a rebirth in the Celestial Realm.

## **4.3 Acinna-kamma (Habitual Kamma)**

### **4.3.1 The Meaning of Acinna-kamma**

**Acinna-kamma** means unwholesome or wholesome deeds which are performed on a regular basis or often. They include physical, verbal, and mental deeds.

### **4.3.2 Characteristics of Acinna-kamma**

Once Karuka-kamma and Asanna-kamma have given their consequences, then it is Acinna-kamma's turn to give its consequences. Whether wholesome or unwholesome Acinna-kamma will give the consequences first depends on its strength. Wholesome and unwholesome Acinnakamma are like two wrestlers who try to beat each other. Acinna-kamma with more strength will send its consequences before Acinna-kamma with less strength.

Good, wholesome deeds such as making an offering of food to Buddhist monks every morning or observing the Precepts everyday, etc., are wholesome Acinna-kamma which is very powerful and causes one to meet with increasing happiness and success. Bad, unwholesome deeds such as fishing on a regular basis, stealing often, butchering pigs and cattle for a living, etc., are unwholesome Acinna-kamma which is very powerful and causes one to meet with great suffering and trouble.

There are two types of Acinna-kamma: Unwholesome Acinna-kamma and wholesome Acinna-kamma.

### **4.3.3 Unwholesome Acinna-kamma**

**Unwholesome Acinna-kamma** means unwholesome deeds which are performed on a regularly basis or often. It causes one to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe and to suffer there for a long, long time.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka A Pig Butcher**

During the time of our Lord Buddha, there was a man by the name of ‘Cunda’. He butchered pigs for a living and had killed a large number of pigs in his life. The more pork he sold, the more pigs he had to butcher. In the years where harvest was not good and food was expensive, he would buy up all the grains and used the grains to barter for piglets from farmers. He would give the farmers one to two measures of half a coconut shell for a piglet.

After he filled his wagon with piglets, he would bring them home and raise them until they were ready to be butchered. In the butchering process, ‘Cunda’ would first tie the pig to a stake. He would then use a big rectangular-shaped hammer to beat the pig’s body to increase the volume of its flesh. He then forced the pig’s mouth open with a piece of wood and poured hot boiling water into it so that the hot water would flush out all that remained in its digestive tract. He would do this until only clear liquid came out through the pig’s anus. Next he poured hot water all over the pig to remove its hair before using a sword to cut off the pig’s head. He used a container to collect the blood.

‘Cunda’ had killed pigs for a living for a total of 55 years and had never once made merit in spite of the fact that his house was not far from the temple where the Lord Buddha was staying. On his deathbed, he fell ill and the flames of the hell realm of Aveci appeared to him. He experienced tremendous suffering and could not remain still on the bed. He crawled around the room and squealed loudly like a pig which was being butchered. His wife and children and his neighbors felt sorry for him and helped him back to the bed. He pushed them away and resumed his crawling and squealing.

He suffered in that manner for seven days before he died. He was reborn a hell creature with a huge body in the hell realm of Aveci. He was burnt by hellfire continuously. He received horrific suffering as a result of his unwholesome Acinna-kamma of slaughtering pigs.

#### **4.3.4 Wholesome Acinna-kamma**

**Wholesome Acinna-kamma** means wholesome deeds which are performed on a regular basis or often. It causes one to be reborn in the States of Happiness.

##### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka A Lady Celestial Being Who Was Once a Female Slave**

Once when our Lord Buddha was staying at the Jetavana Temple in the city of Savatthi of the kingdom of Kosala, a male lay devotee went to the temple along with his lay devotee friends in the evening to listen to the Dhamma lecture from the Lord Buddha. After the lecture, everyone left the temple to go home except for the lay devotee. He approached the Lord Buddha, paid Him a deep homage and said that he wished to make a food offering to four Buddhist monks on a regular basis. The Lord Buddha told him to see the monk who was in charge of making such arrangements.

Once everything had been arranged, he returned to his house and told a female slave to prepare food for the four Buddhist monks everyday. This female slave was a devout Buddhist and felt very happy to be given the job. Every morning, she would rise before dawn to prepare food and scented cushions for the monks. When they arrived, she would with deep respect invite the monks to be seated on the cushions. She paid them homage and made an offering of candles, incense sticks, and flowers before making the offering of food in a respectful manner.

One day after the monks finished eating, she respectfully asked them a question. “What must a person do in order to meet with ease and happiness in the hereafter?” She asked the question because she did not want to be reborn a female slave in her future existence. The monks answered, “If you desire happiness and ease in your future existence, you must take the Triple Gem to be your refuge and observe the Precepts.” They led her to request the Triple Gem to be her refuge and to request the Precepts. In addition, they told her about the fruits of these wholesome deeds. From that day onward, the female slave took the Triple Gem to be her refuge and observed the Precepts meticulously for the rest of her life. Sixteen years later, she died and was reborn a beautiful lady celestial being in the Celestial Realm. Her wholesome Acinna-kamma of taking the Triple Gem to be her refuge and observing the Precepts caused her to be reborn in the Celestial Realm.

## 4.4 Katatta-kamma (Casual Kamma)

### 4.4.1 The Meaning of Katatta-kamma

**Katatta-kamma** means unwholesome and wholesome deeds which an individual has performed both in the past and present existences. It does not have the strength of Karuka-kamma, Asanna-kamma, or Acinna-kamma. They are deeds that have been performed unintentionally.

### 4.4.2 Characteristics of Katatta-kamma

Katatta-kamma has the least strength of the four types of Kamma. Katatta-kamma is an unintentional deed such as that of an innocent child. For example, if its parents have 'Right View' and are devoted to making merit, they will naturally want to instill these values in their child. When they make an offering of food to the monks, they may take the child's hand and help it to give food to the monks. They may teach the child to pay respect to the monks. Although the child may have no idea about what it is doing, these wholesome deeds will still give their consequences albeit weakly. The reason is Kamma means an intentional act. If no intention is involved then the action is not considered to be Kamma or if it is, it will not have as strong an effect as an intentional Kamma.

The timing of the consequences of Katatta-kamma is not definite because it is weak Kamma and can only support other types of stronger Kamma. Katatta-kamma can be compared to an arrow which is shot by a blind person. It cannot hit the target because the blind person does not know where the target is. He only knows that it will eventually fall to the ground. This is in the same way with Katatta-kamma. It cannot be said that Katatta-kamma will give its consequences in this or that existence. It can only be said that it will give its consequences some time in the future.

There are two types of Katatta-kamma: Unwholesome Katatta-kamma and wholesome Katatta-kamma.

### 4.4.3 Unwholesome Katatta-kamma

**Unwholesome Katatta-kamma** means unintentional, unwholesome deeds which cause one to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka The Past Kamma of a Peta**

There was once a farmer who lived during the time of the Lord Kassapa Buddha. One day the people got together to make merit at the temple and to pay homage to the

Lord Buddha. They invited him to join them but he did not go because he thought of it as a waste of time. He did not listen to the people when they told him that making merit with the Lord Buddha was worth a great deal more than plowing the rice field.

He said with annoyance to the people, “What makes the Lord Kassapa Buddha so great? Could He plow the field as I do?” The people were shocked to hear what he said. They praised the Lord Buddha and told him that he should never be disrespectful to the Lord Buddha. They told him about the great harm of being disrespectful to the Lord Buddha but he was eventually filled with indignation and said rudely, “All right, enough already. So the Lord Kasspa Buddha is great but I still believe that as long as He cannot plow the field as I do, I will not make any merit or pay Him homage. If He should take up the ploughshare and plow the field, then I will make merit and pay Him homage.” Because of these disrespectful remarks which were made as a sarcastic response to the people’s goodwill, after he died he was reborn a Peta. He suffered tremendous hunger all the time and without any respite.

#### **4.4.4 Wholesome Katatta-kamma**

**Wholesome Katatta-kamma** means unintentional wholesome deeds which cause one to be reborn in the States of Happiness.

#### **A Case Study as Recorded in the Tripitaka The Hereafter of a Frog**

Near dawn one day during the time of our Lord Buddha, He was staying at a temple by the lotus pond in the city of Campa. He had checked to see whom He could save on that day. He could see that in that very evening during His Dhamma lecture, there would be a frog there which after having heard His voice would be reborn in the Celestial Realm. The Lord Buddha then carried on with His daily activities as usual.

In the evening the four Buddhist communities, which included male and female monks, male and female lay devotees, as usual assembled in the pavilion to listen to the Dhamma lecture. The Lord Buddha left His perfumed dwelling to go to the pavilion which was situated by the lotus pond. After being seated on the Buddha-seat, the Lord Buddha gave a Dhamma lecture in a resounding and glorious voice.

At the same moment, a frog was swimming around in the lotus pond. It heard the Lord Buddha’s voice and felt so delighted to hear it. Although it could not understand the words, it was so moved by the Lord Buddha’s voice that it immediately jumped out of the water and went to sit on the grass near the rear of the pavilion. With great joy, it closed its eyes to listen to the Lord Buddha’s voice. While it was completely immersed in the Lord Buddha’s voice, a cow herder happened to walk past the area. He saw that the Lord Buddha was delivering a Dhamma lecture and felt a deep desire to listen to it. He went to stand by the frog but the frog was completely unaware of his presence. As the cow herder

stood listening to the Dhamma lecture, he stuck the goad to the ground and accidentally crushed the frog's head and killed it.

The frog was instantly reborn a handsome gentleman celestial being in the Tavatimsa Realm as a result of having felt moved by the Lord Buddha's voice even though it had no idea what He was saying. It was this Katatta-kamma which caused it to be reborn in the Celestial Realm.

To conclude, Pakadana-pariyaya-catukaka refers to the four different types of Kamma. If all four types of Kamma are performed, Karuka-kamma will give its consequences first because it is the gravest and most powerful Kamma. Unwholesome Karuka-kamma will cause a rebirth in the hell realm of Aveci. Sangha-bheda causes the person who performs it to suffer for an entire Kappa in the hell realm of Aveci. Wholesome Karuka-kamma causes the person who performs it to be reborn in the Brahma Realm.

If Karuka-kamma is not performed then Asanna-kamma will be next in line to give its consequences. Unwholesome Asanna-kamma causes the person who performs it to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe whereas wholesome Asanna-kamma causes the person who performs it to be reborn in the States of Happiness.

If Karuka-kamma and Asanna-kamma are not performed then Acinna-kamma will be next in line to give its consequences. Unwholesome Acinna-kamma causes the person who performs it to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe whereas wholesome Acinna-kamma causes one to be reborn in the States of Happiness.

If Karuka-kamma, Asanna-kamma, and Acinna-kamma are not performed, it means that one has not performed serious unwholesome and wholesome Kamma. In this case, Katatta-kamma will be next in line to give its consequences. Unwholesome Katatta-kamma causes the person who performs it to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe whereas wholesome Katatta-kamma causes the person who performs it to be reborn in the States of Happiness.

The four types of Kamma possess different strengths in the following descending order: Karuka-kamma > Asanna-kamma > Acinna-kamma > Katatta-kamma.

All of us need to exercise vigilance and make sure that we do not abuse anyone with our body, words, and thoughts because every single one of our deeds has consequences. Moreover, we must endeavor to accumulate more and more good deeds and abandon recklessness because it is very difficult indeed to be reborn a human being. The Lord Buddha taught that "Suppose someone throws a noose into the ocean where a blind turtle lives. Every 100 years, it would come up to the surface. The chance of this blind turtle getting its head caught in the noose is as rare as a human rebirth."

Since rebirth as a human being is very rare, we must live our life in the most worthwhile manner in order to benefit our self and our fellow human beings. We must accumulate merit on a regular basis. We should choose to forget about our past mistakes and determine to perform only good deeds every minute of everyday. We should keep our mind clear and bright so that our past unwholesome Kamma will not have the chance to give its consequences. Our accumulated good deeds will not only keep us out of the States of Loss and Woe but will also cause us to meet with increasing prosperity in the present existence.

### **Exercises**

After the student finishes studying this chapter, the student should complete the test and exercises 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 in the workbook before beginning Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER 5

# THE THIRD CATEGORY OF KAMMA: KAMMA WHICH GIVES ITS CONSEQUENCES AS A FUNCTION OF TIME

### Topics Covered in Chapter 5

#### **5.1 Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma (Immediately Effective Kamma)**

- 5.1.1 The Meaning of Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma
- 5.1.2 Characteristics of Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma
  - 1. Pari-pakka- dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma
  - 2. Apari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma

#### **5.2 Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma (Subsequently Effective Kamma)**

- 5.2.1 The Meaning of Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma
- 5.2.2 Characteristics of Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma
  - 1. Unwholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma
  - 2. Wholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma

#### **5.3 Aparā-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma (Indefinitely Effective Kamma)**

- 5.3.1 The Meaning of Aparā-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma
- 5.3.2 Characteristics of Aparā-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma
  - 1. Unwholesome Aparā-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma
  - 2. Wholesome Aparā-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma

#### **5.4 Ahosi-kamma (Defunct Kamma)**

- 5.4.1 The Meaning of Ahosi-kamma
- 5.4.2 Characteristics of Ahosi-kamma
  - 1. Unwholesome Ahosi-kamma
  - 2. Wholesome Ahosi-kamma

## Concepts

1. Although it is very difficult to understand the workings of Kamma, however, we do see them at work everyday. We may have witnessed for example someone's sudden change of fortune from wealth to poverty. This is due to the fact that Kamma gives its consequences according to its timeframe.
2. All of the unwholesome and wholesome Kamma which an individual has ever performed do not disappear but remain within his/her consciousness. Some Kamma gives its consequences within this lifetime. Some Kamma will give its consequences in the next lifetime and that is all. Some Kamma continues to give its consequences throughout endless lifetimes. Some Kamma does not give any consequences at all because it has been transformed into Ahosi-kamma or Defunct Kamma.
3. It is very important to learn about the Law of Kamma from real life stories which had been recorded in the Tripitaka because it will allow us to better understand the consequences of Kamma in both the theoretical and practical parts.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to correctly understand and describe the meaning, the characteristics, and the types of Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma, Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma, Aparā-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma, and Ahosi-kamma.
2. To enable the student to understand and analyze how the real life stories in the Tripitaka match the theory of the Law of Kamma.

## **THE THIRD CATEGORY OF KAMMA: KAMMA WHICH GIVES ITS CONSEQUENCES AS A FUNCTION OF TIME**

Many people nowadays doubt the fact that **‘a good deed results in good consequences and a bad deed results in bad consequences’**. Some people believe that **‘Kamma has no consequences, since death is the end of everything’**. These and other beliefs arise from the fact that these individuals have not studied the Lord Buddha’s Teachings in any depth if at all. These wrong views discourage people from performing wholesome deeds or from trying to be a decent person. The material covered in the previous chapters of this book should allow the student to better understand the complex workings of the Law of Kamma. Every single one of our deeds or Kamma has consequences and it is only a matter of time before the consequences show up. The reason is every thought we have, every word we utter, and every action we take throughout our countless lifetimes has been recorded in our consciousness. We may have stolen once and gotten away with it. When this unwholesome Kamma gives its consequences, it will cause us to unexpectedly experience financial loss. For example, we may lose money in our business. Our house may be broken into and valuable possessions are stolen, etc.

The main point we should take away with us in studying about the Law of Kamma is the fact that **‘Kamma has definite consequences’**. Just because we do not experience the consequences of a particular Kamma in this lifetime does not mean that we will not experience them in the next or future lifetime. An individual may have performed wicked deeds but appear to be doing very well. In this case it means that the individual had accumulated a great deal of merit in his/her previous lifetime and these wholesome deeds are still giving its good consequences. But the minute his/her merit runs out, his/her unwholesome Kamma will give its ill consequences immediately. That is a certainty.

Individuals that commit misdeeds tend not to believe in the Law of Kamma as long as their unwholesome deeds still have not caught up with them, since they are still experiencing the consequences of their past good Kamma. This makes them feel complacent and arrogant. They are led to believe that unwholesome deeds give no consequences. They believe that there is no hereafter. They do not believe in the round of rebirth. They believe that they can commit all the misdeeds they want

as long as they can get away with it here and now. They also believe that they will never have to meet with the ill consequences of their misdeeds. There are individuals who try to accumulate good deeds and wish that their good deeds will send their consequences quickly but when that does not happen, they feel discouraged and believe that their wholesome deeds do not give any good consequences.

The Lord Buddha said,

A person who commits misdeeds believes that misdeeds are good as long as his misdeeds have not yet given their consequences. But when his misdeeds start to give their ill consequences, he will believe that misdeeds are bad. A person who performs wholesome deeds will think them bad as long as his wholesome deeds have not yet given their consequences. But when his wholesome deeds give their good consequences, he will believe that wholesome deeds are good.

Therefore, we should believe that our Kamma will definitely give its consequences. We should not think how other people are experiencing greater prosperity and happiness than us even though we have already accumulated a lot of merit. Least of all we should not form the opinion that these other individuals meet with success and prosperity, in spite of the fact that they have hardly accumulated any merit. It is thoughts like these that will trouble us and eventually discourage us from performing good deeds. Worst, we may even decide to commit misdeeds for one reason or another only to meet with untold ill consequences afterward. However, if we believe in the complex workings of the Law of Kamma and continue to accumulate more and more wholesome deeds, we will definitely meet with greater happiness and prosperity. Our efforts are not unlike a seedling which needs many years before it grows into a great tree that gives shade to many. Both unwholesome and wholesome Kamma have a timeframe in which to give their consequences.

In this chapter, the student will learn about Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of time. This third category of Kamma is called '**Paka-kala-catu-kaka**'. There are four types of 'Paka-kala-catu-kaka' as follows:

1. **Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma** (Effective Kamma)
2. **Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma** (Subsequently Effective Kamma)
3. **Apara-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma** (Indefinitely Effective Kamma)
4. **Ahosi-kamma** (Defunct Kamma)

## 5.1 Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma (Immediately Effective Kamma)

### 5.1.1 The Meaning of Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma

**Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma** means Kamma which gives its consequences now or in the current lifetime. Once performed, this type of Kamma gives its consequences quickly. The effect is immediate.

### 5.1.2 Characteristics of Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma

Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma can be compared to a hunter who kills a deer with an arrow. If he hits the target then he would have venison for his family but if he misses, the deer would run for its life. In the same manner if an individual's unwholesome or wholesome deed which has been performed in the current lifetime does not give its consequences now, it will turn into Ahosi-kamma and will never give its consequences ever again.

In performing a deed through the body, the words, the thoughts, wholesome or unwholesome, there is a period during which there is full perception and at which Kamma is performed. This process of consciousness usually lasts for countless number of seven thought-moments. This process is called 'Javana-cita'. **Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma occurs during the first thought-moment or the first 'Javana-cita'.**

Therefore, Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma can only give its consequences within the current lifetime because the wholesome or unwholesome intention is confined to the first 'Javana-cita'. Therefore, it has a very weak effect. There are two types of Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma as follows:

- 1) **Pari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma:** Not only will it give its consequences within this lifetime but within seven days. There is unwholesome and wholesome Pari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma as follows:
  - **Unwholesome Pari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma**  
It will cause its performer to suffer the ill consequences of the misdeed within seven days as in the case of '**King Supapa-buddha-sakaya**' as recorded in the Tripitaka.

King Supapa-buddha-sakaya was the sovereign of the city of Deva-daha and was the father of Phra Devadat and Princess Yasodhara. King Supapa-buddha-sakaya was angry with the Lord Buddha for two reasons: One for having abandoned Princess Yasodhara; two for not allowing Phra Devadat to have his way. One day he decided to block the Lord Buddha's path during His alms-round by sitting down to drink alcohol in His path.

Many people tried to dissuade the king from doing it but he did not listen to anyone. The Lord Buddha decided to turn back when He saw the path being blocked by the king.

After this incident, the Lord Buddha told Phra Ananda that King Supapabbuddha-sakaya had committed a grave misdeed and within seven days he would be swallowed up by the ground near the staircase outside his own castle. When the king's spy relayed the Lord Buddha's words to him, he fled to the seventh floor of the castle and told his pages to guard the staircase and prevent him from coming down the stairs for the entire seven days. He wanted to prove the Lord Buddha wrong.

On the seventh day, the king's auspicious horse started to act up for no apparent reasons but as soon as it saw the king's face at the window, it calmed down. The king wanted to catch the horse so he descended to the main floor of the castle. The castle door opened by itself and the pages tried to restrain the king. But the power of the king's unwholesome Kamma caused him to fall with his face down to the ground. At that instant, the ground separated and he was pulled toward the hell realm of Aveci Mahanarok. The king's unwholesome Pari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma caused him to receive its ill consequences within seven days.

○ **Wholesome Pari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma**

It will cause the performer of this type of Kamma to experience happiness and prosperity within seven days as in case of '**The Millionaire Kala-valiya**' as recorded in the Tripitaka.

During the time of the Lord Buddha, there was a poor man by the name of 'Kala-valiya'. He had to work very hard just to eke out a living. One day his wife prepared young rice grains and pickled vegetables for him. On the same day, Phra Maha-kassapa had just emerged from the bliss of deep meditation and desired to bless a poor person. He saw Kala-valiya's wife in his nana (Insight) and subsequently went to stand at the door of their house. The woman felt a deep devotion toward the senior monk and respectfully made an offering of the rice and pickled vegetables to him. She was so delighted with her alms-giving and went to tell her husband about it.

When Kala-valiya heard about his wife's merit-making, he sincerely rejoiced in his wife's action. Later, Phra Maha-kassapa offered the food to the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha in turn gave the food to other monks. Kala-valiya followed the senior monk to the temple and was there in time to eat some of the leftovers. Afterward, the senior monk asked the Lord Buddha about the consequences of Kala-valiya's action. The Lord Buddha

said that within seven days, Kala-valiya would be honored by the king as a millionaire. The Lord Buddha's words filled Kala-valiya with great delight. And indeed what the Lord Buddha said did come to pass. It so happened that Kala-valiya's wife had volunteered to do a service for the king. She agreed to bring food for the prisoners that had been pierced with sharp stakes and put on display. They were left to die slowly and horribly in the grounds of the corpse-yard which was filled with non-humans.

On her way to the corpse-yard, an ogre appeared to her and asked her to make an announcement for him. The announcement had to do with the fact that the ogre's wife, who was the daughter of the ogre 'Sumana', had just given birth to a male ogre. When 'Sumana' heard the announcement, it made him so happy that he gave her the treasure hidden beneath the banyan tree. After having fed the poor prisoners, she returned to the city and told the king about what happened. King Bimbisara commanded the royal officials to unearth the hidden treasure. As a result, both husband and wife were honored by the king as the city's millionaire. And their new name was 'Thana'. They enjoyed a life of ease and comfort for the rest of their lives. Their wholesome Pari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma caused Kala-valiya and his wife to become a millionaire practically overnight.

Pari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is a very powerful Kamma which gives its consequences within seven days.

2) **Apari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma:** This type of Kamma gives its consequences within this lifetime but later than seven days after it is performed. The different timeframes in which this type of Kamma gives its consequences are as follows:

1. If unwholesome or wholesome Apari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is performed when the individual is young, he/she may receive its consequences as a young adult, as a middle-age person, or as an old person.
2. If unwholesome or wholesome Apari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is performed when the individual is in his/her middle age, he/she may receive its consequences in his/her middle years or final years.
3. If unwholesome or wholesome Apari-pakka-dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is performed when the individual is in his/her final years, he/she will receive its consequences in his/her final years.

In order to better appreciate the timeframes in which this type of Kamma gives its consequences, the following case as recorded in the Tripitaka will be used.

### **The Immediate Consequences of a Man Who Was Very Fond of Meat**

During the time of our Lord Buddha, there was a man who earned his living by being a butcher. He slaughtered animals everyday and prepared their meat for sale. He would keep the lean meat for his and his family's consumption. He butchered animals for a living for 45 years. Throughout his life, he had never once thought about giving alms, observing the Precepts or practicing meditation in spite of the fact that the Lord Buddha was staying in the Veluvana Temple not far from his house. He saw the Lord Buddha and the Buddhist monks walk by his shop on a regular basis but had never once wanted to listen to a Dhamma lecture or even paid homage to the Lord Buddha and the monks.

This man would only eat the meat that he butchered. One day all the meat was sold out except for the piece of meat which he had given to his wife to cook for him. While he was taking a bath, a close friend of his came by to buy some meat. His wife told the friend that all the meat had been sold except for the piece that she was about to cook for her husband. The friend insisted on buying this last piece of meat and paid her for it.

After the butcher had bathed, he found out from his wife that his friend had already bought the meat she was about to cook for him. In great exasperation, exacerbated no doubt by his hunger, the butcher took his knife and went to the back of the house where a cow had been tied to a post. He pulled out the cow's tongue and cut it with his knife. He then gave the bloody tongue to his wife to cook for him. The poor cow cried out in agony and as the wound continued to bleed profusely, it eventually bled to death.

After his wife cooked the tongue, he sat down to eat. He had only taken a few bites when all of a sudden his own tongue fell out of his mouth and onto the plate. Blood spurted from his mouth. He opened his mouth and cried out loudly. He crawled around the house until the floor was wet with his saliva and blood. He was in pure agony. He eventually bled to death in front of his wife and children.



As mentioned earlier, Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma will give its consequences within this lifetime providing that this type of Kamma meets one of the following four criteria:

1. **When one Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is not opposed by another Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma.** That is when one wholesome Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is not counteracted by a corresponding unwholesome Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma. If opposing Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma occurs then it will cancel each other out and become Ahosi-kamma.
2. **When Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is particularly powerful** because it is supported by four types of Vipatti<sup>1</sup> and four types of Sampatti<sup>2</sup>. Wholesome Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma consists of the four types of Sampatti whereas unwholesome Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma consists of the four types of Vipatti.
3. **When Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is extremely powerful as a result of one's strong determination** to perform the unwholesome or wholesome deed. If the determination is not strong enough, this type of Kamma will turn into Ahosi-kamma and will not give any consequences.
4. **When wholesome or unwholesome Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma is performed toward or against holy individuals.** This type of unwholesome Kamma can be exemplified by the incident where the Yakkha 'Nanda' struck Phra Sariputra's head while he was immersed in the bliss of deep meditation. As a result, the Yakkha was subsequently swallowed up by the ground. This type of wholesome Kamma can be exemplified by the incident where the very poor man 'Maha-duggata' was determined to give alms and was able to offer them to the Lord Kassapa Buddha. As a result, he subsequently became a very rich man.

Therefore, for Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma to give its consequences within this lifetime, it has to meet one of the four above criteria. Otherwise, it will immediately turn into Ahosikamma.

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<sup>1</sup> **Four Types of Vipatti** include 1) **Gati-vipatti:** being reborn in the States of Unhappiness; 2) **Upadhi-vipatti:** being reborn with a physical handicap; 3) **Kala-vipatti:** being reborn in an age where the ruler has Wrong View; and 4) **Payoga-vipatti:** practicing wrong perseverance.

<sup>2</sup> **Four types of Sampatti** include 1) **Gati-sampatti:** being reborn in the States of Happiness; 2) **Upadhi-sampatti:** being reborn with good looks; 3) **Kala-sampatti:** being reborn in an age where the ruler has Right View; and 4) **Payoga-sampatti:** practicing right perseverance.

## 5.2 Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma (Subsequently Effective Kamma)

### 5.2.1 The Meaning of Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma

**Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma** means Kamma which will definitely give its consequences in the next lifetime.

### 5.2.2 Characteristics of Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma

Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma will give its consequences in the next lifetime because it is performed during the seventh thought-moment or the seventh ‘Javana-citta’. It means that when an unwholesome or wholesome Kamma which is performed during the first thought-moment (dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma) does not have the opportunity to send its consequences then it us up to Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma to give its consequences in the next lifetime. There are two types of Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma: Unwholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma and wholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma.

- 1) **Unwholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma** is very grave Kamma and includes the five types of Ananta-riya-kamma and Nitaya-miccha-ditthi-kamma. The incident we are about to study was recorded in the Tripitaka. It is the story about **‘The Hereafter of the Layman ‘Nandiya’ and His Wife ‘Revadi’**.

There was once in the city of Benares a very wealthy family. The family members had Right View and were devout Buddhists. When the son of this family whose name was ‘Nandiya’ was of age, his parents arranged his marriage to a woman named ‘Revadi’. Since Revadi was not a person of faith and was miserly by nature, Nandiya did not want to marry her. His parents came up with a scheme to have Revadi come to live in the house and pretend to be a lay-devotee. Revadi decided to go along with the plan and Nandiya eventually decided to marry her.

After Nandiya’s parents died, Revadi was in charge of the household. The more Nandiya supported Buddhism, the more devoted he was to the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. Once he commissioned four great pavilions to be built in the deer sanctuary. They were subsequently furnished with beds, chairs, tables, etc. To celebrate the completion of the pavilions, Nandiya invited a large number of monks presided over by the Lord Buddha to attend the celebration. When everything was ready, Nandiya offered the pavilions to the Buddhist monks by pouring water onto the Lord Buddha’s hand to signify the transfer of ownership. In that instant, Nandiya’s celestial mansion which was decorated with seven types of precious gems, 192 kilometers wide, 192 kilometers long, and 1,600 kilometers high along with 1,000 celestial attendants appeared instantly in the Tavatimsa Realm.

Later, Nandiya was out of town for many days to conduct his business transaction so he asked Revadi to take care of the offering of alms to the Buddhist monks and the poor for him. She continued to give alms for only a couple of days and then stopped doing it altogether. Besides, she gave alms with disrespect by offering putrid leftovers to the monks. The monks had to throw the contents away after they returned to the temple. When Revadi heard about this, she made it a point to vilify the monks and to stop alms-giving altogether.

When Nandiya returned home and heard about Revadi's treatment of the Buddhist monks, he chased Revadi out of the house. He resumed his alms-giving to the Lord Buddha, the Buddhist monks and the poor. After he died, he was reborn in the Tavatimsa Realm enjoying the ecstasy of his celestial estate. Revadi returned home to inherit her husband's fortune. She did not continue with the alms-giving. Moreover, she continued to vilify the Buddhist monks. One night during her sleep, she heard a voice above her saying "Seven days from now, Revadi, you will die and be reborn in the Hell Realm."

Revadi was terror-stricken and had the doors of her castle bolted shut. On the seventh day, King Vessuvan commanded two Yakkha subjects to bring Revadi around the city for the masses to see before taking her to the Tavatimsa Realm to show her Nandiya's celestial estate. Afterward, they took her to the hell realm of Ussadanarok. The hell denizens immediately cut off her hands, her feet, her ears, her nose, and left what was left of her body to be pecked at by a flock of hell crows. Revadi's grave misdeed of vilifying the Buddhist monks who practiced righteousness became unwholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma which gave its consequences in the following existence.

- 2) **Wholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma** is very weighty Kamma and includes the eight types of Mahac-cata-kusala which allows an individual to attain the Jhanas. When the individual dies, his Jhana attainments will cause him to be reborn in the Brahma Realm. If the Jhana attainments are weak then the Kamma will turn into Ahosi-kamma as in the following case study.

### **A Yogi's Ascetic Practice Was Undermined.**

A long, long time ago in the city of Benares, our Bodhisatta was reborn a Brahmin by the name of 'Udicca'. After graduating from the arts, he ordained as a Yogi and went to live in the Himavanta Forest. There he had practiced meditation until he attained the Jhanas and Supernormal Powers. In the forest there was a doe which grazed on grass and drank water from the Yogi's urinal pit which contained his semen. The doe felt a deep devotion for the Yogi and eventually became pregnant. She gave birth to a male infant and the Yogi named him 'Isi-singa'. After Isi-singa grew up, he ordained as a Yogi and practiced meditation by gazing at an object until he attained the Jhanas and Supernormal Powers. He had

diligently practiced going in and out of each Jhana so expertly that King Sakka became anxious that he would soon be out of power and be replaced by Isi-singa as a result of his Perfections and Precepts. King Sakka felt that he had to do something to destroy the Yogi's Precepts. Therefore, he caused no rain to fall in the kingdom of Kasika for three whole years. People suffered tremendous hardship and asked their king for help. King Sakka subsequently appeared to the king of Kasika and told him that "The Yogi Isi-singa's ascetic practice is so bold and strong that he is causing drought by staring into the air. To correct the situation, his ascetic practice must be destroyed." The king decided to send his daughter, Princess Nalinika, to go and do the job of destroying the Yogi's ascetic practice.

One day, our Bodhisatta, the Yogi 'Udicca' left his son alone in the ashram while he went into the forest to look for fruit. Princess Nalinika under the guise of a Yogi went into the ashram and caused Isi-singa's practice of chastity to be violated. Having finished her assignment, she immediately returned to the city. Our Bodhisatta returned to find his son in a delirious state and knew that his son's chastity had been violated. He said to Isi-singa,

"Behold, son, there are Yakkhas who go around the Human Realm and assume different forms in order to consume human beings that fall under their powers. Therefore, a wise person does not associate with Yakkhas. In the same manner, the practice of chastity comes to an end when one falls for someone in the guise of a Yogi. A Yakkhini has indeed found you but has not eaten you up yet."

Isi-singa's awareness returned as a result of his father's words. He began to practice the Four Noble Sentiments which include loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. As a result of these practices, he was able to regain the Jhanas and Supernormal Powers. He had practiced the Four Noble Sentiments for the rest of his life. After he died, his wholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma caused him to be reborn in the Brahma Realm.

Both unwholesome and wholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma gives their consequences according to the gravity level of each Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma. When a number of unwholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma have been performed, the gravest Kamma will give its consequences as soon as the individual dies. For example, if an individual commits all five types of Ananta-riya-kamma, after he dies, Sangha-bheda, which is the gravest type of Ananta-riya-kamma, will cause the individual to be reborn in the Hell Realm. At the same time, the rest of the Ananta-riya-kamma will immediately become Ahosikamma and will never give their consequences.

## 5.3 Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma (Indefinitely Effective Kamma)

### 5.3.1 The Meaning of Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma

Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma composes of three words: **Aparā** which means another realm, another lifetime; **Pariyāya** which means timeframes; **Vedaniya** which means the consequences of Kamma. When the three words are combined, the term means Kamma which will give its consequences in future lifetimes. That is, in the third or more lifetime from now.

### 5.3.2 Characteristics of Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma

Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma is Kamma which will give its consequences in the next three or more lifetimes. Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma occurs during the second to the sixth thought-moments and once performed it will follow the person everywhere and will give its consequences as soon as the time is right. It can be compared to a hunter who goes hunting with the help of a pack of dogs. As soon as the hunter spots a deer, he lets the dogs loose to chase after the deer. As soon as they catch the deer, they will bring it down. In the same manner, Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma will follow a person until it is time to give its consequences. The only exception is when the person attains the Arahantship. In that case, Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma will not be able to give its consequences. There are two types of Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma: unwholesome and wholesome Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma.

- 1) **Unwholesome Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma:** It means unwholesome deeds that will cause suffering and trouble for the person in the next three or more lifetimes as can be seen in the following case study as recorded in the Tripitaka: **Death as a Consequence of Unwholesome Aparā-pariyāya-veda-niyya-kamma**

During the time of our Lord Buddha, a group of Buddhist monks boarded a large sea-faring vessel in order to come to the city of Savatthi where the Lord Buddha was staying. One day, in the middle of the sea, the vessel stopped still for no apparent reason. The captain sent some crew members to investigate what was causing the vessel to stop moving but they could not find anything wrong with it. The captain decided to call the passengers together in order to inform them of the situation with the hope that they could come up with an idea to help solve the problem. Finally, one passenger said that the situation was caused by a person of ill-fortune in their midst. Everyone agreed and decided to draw lots to see who the person of ill-fortune might be. It so happened that the captain's young wife drew the lot three times in a row. For the sake of the crew and the passengers, the captain decided to tie a container filled with sand around his wife's neck and

threw her along with the container of sand into the sea. As soon as the deed was done, the vessel miraculously started moving once again.

The Buddhist monks witnessed the incident with great sadness and wondered why the vessel stopped still when nothing was wrong with it and why the young woman had to die at such a young age. As soon as they were in the Lord Buddha's presence, they recounted the incident to Him and requested Him to explain to them the reason behind the young woman's death.

The Lord Buddha told them that in one of her previous lifetimes, she was born the wife of a rice farmer. She was a good housewife. One day she found a street dog and decided to keep it. She took good care of it and the dog was devoted to her. It followed her everywhere. It would be nearby and watch her do every chore. A group of young men began to tease her about the dog until she felt very embarrassed. As a result, she would beat the dog with a stick to discourage it from following her. Since the dog was her husband in a past lifetime, it continued to follow her everywhere.

She was so angry at the dog for disobeying her that one day after having delivered food to her husband who was working in the paddies, she called the dog to her. As soon as it came to her, she tied the dog's neck with a container filled with sand and pushed it into the water. As a result of this misdeed, she was reborn in the States of Loss and Woe and suffered horrifically there for a long, long time. Once most of her misdeed had been paid for, she was reborn the captain's wife. What she did to the dog two lifetimes ago became unwholesome *Apara-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma* which caused her to suffer in the third existence the same fate as the dog.

**2) Wholesome *Apara-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma*:** It means wholesome deeds that will cause the individual to meet with happiness and success starting in the third existence from now as in the case of '**Queen Mallika**' as recorded in the Tripitaka.

Queen Mallika was responsible for making an offering of *Asa-disa-dana* to the Lord Buddha. *Asa-disa-dana* means an Unparalleled Gift which is offered to the Lord Buddha and occurs only once during the life of each Buddha. She had also accumulated tremendous amount of merit. She did; however, commit a misdeed by lying to her husband about the fact that she had a sexual relationship with a dog. Although her husband, King Pasen-di-kosala paid no mind to her deviant behavior, the obscene deed stuck to her memory up until the last day of her life. As a result, she was reborn in the hell realm of *Aveci Mahanarok* for seven earth days before she was reborn in the *Tusita Realm* to enjoy the ecstasy of her celestial estate. Her most recent rebirth is a result of her wholesome *Apara-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma*, which gave its consequences in the third existence.

## 5.4 Ahosi-kamma (Defunct Kamma)

### 5.4.1 The Meaning of Ahosi-kamma

**Ahosi-kamma** means unwholesome or wholesome Kamma which has already given its consequences or Kamma which is waiting to give its consequences when it becomes defunct. Therefore, Ahosi-kamma is Kamma which will never give its consequences.

### 5.4.2 Characteristics of Ahosi-kamma

Ahosi-kamma can be compared to seeds that have been stored for too long or seeds that have been roasted. When the seeds are sown, they cannot grow in spite of rich soil and adequate water. The Tripitaka under the subject of ‘The Way of Mutta-sangaha-vibhaga’ had the following to say about Ahosi-kamma.

1. **Ahosi-kamman nahosi-kamma-vipako:** Kamma which has already given its consequences by causing the individual to meet with suffering in the Hell Realm or utter happiness in the Celestial Realm. The Kamma then becomes defunct. Or after a more powerful Kamma has already given its consequences, it then causes the less powerful Kamma to be defunct. For example, when an individual has attained the third Jhana, then the first and the second Jhanas will not give their consequences and become defunct.
2. **Ahosi-kamman natthi-kamma-vipako:** Kamma which will no longer give its consequences. It can be unwholesome or wholesome Kamma which is performed in the current lifetime but cannot give any consequences by causing the individual who performs the Kamma to experience suffering or happiness. One example is Kiriya-citta or functional consciousness which yields defunct Kamma. Another example is when an individual’s past wholesome Kamma stops sending its consequences because it is overpowered by a much weightier unwholesome Kamma. In this case, this particular past wholesome Kamma will become defunct. In the same manner, an individual’s unwholesome Kamma can stop sending its consequences because it is overpowered by a much weightier wholesome Kamma. Therefore, this particular past unwholesome Kamma will become defunct.
3. **Ahosi-kamman nabha-vissati-kamma-vipako:** Kamma which has no consequences as in the case of Phra Ongulimala. His unwholesome Kamma of killing so many people could not give its consequences as soon as he was able to attain the Arahatsip, which caused the round of rebirth to be terminated. His unwholesome Kamma turned into Ahosi-kamma. It is like a person who runs away from a chasing dog. Once he crosses to the other side, the dog can no longer reach him. Since the person does not return, the dog can only watch him until it dies.

The **Sammoha-vino-dani Scripture** has the following to teach about Ahosi-kamma.

Of all the various types of Kamma including Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma, once one Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma gives its consequences in the current existence, the rest of Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma will not give its consequences at all. When Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma has been performed, the rest of the Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma will not give its consequences at all. Once one type of Ananta-riya-kamma causes an individual to be reborn in the Hell Realm, the rest of the Ananta-riya-kamma will not give its consequences at all. When Jhana attainments cause an individual to be reborn in the Brahma Realm, the rest of the same type of Kamma will not give its consequences at all.

The three types of Ahosi-kamma which includes Ahosi-kamman nahosi-kamma-vipako, Ahosi-kamman natthi-kamma-vipako, and Ahosi-kamman nabha-vissati-kamma-vipako, will become defunct once it is past the time for it to give its consequences. In the situation where the individual attains Nibbana, everyone single one of his Kamma will become defunct. There are two types of Ahosi-kamma: Unwholesome and wholesome Ahosi-kamma.

- 1) **Unwholesome Ahosi-kamma:** It means unwholesome deeds which will not give their consequences because they are overdue as in a case recorded in the Tripitaka: **The Story about Phra Malaka-tissa.**

Phra Malaka-tissa was born in a hunter's family. The Buddhist monks from the Gamena-davasi Temple in the suburb of Rohana had to pass by the hunter's family home when they went on their alms-round. After Malaka-tissa grew up, he earned a living by being a hunter just like his father and grandfather before him. He trapped animals using different methods and accumulated many unwholesome deeds. One day, he carried a torch and some salt out of the house and headed toward the forest. There he killed a deer which had been caught in his trap. He subsequently cooked some of the meat and ate it. On the way back he felt very thirsty and stopped by the Gamena-davasi Temple to look for some water to drink. In spite of the fact that the temple had ten large water vessels, he could not find anything to drink. He was angry and criticized the temple which had many Buddhist monks but could not be bothered to provide any water to quench the thirst of the thirsty. The senior monk Phra Cula-pinda-patika-tissa heard the hunter and went to him right away. He noticed that the water vessels were filled to the brim with water, so he concluded that the being in front of him had to be a Jiva-mana Peta. The senior monk said, "Layman, you can quench your thirst now." He picked up



the water vessel and poured some water onto the hunter's hands. However, the hunter's accumulated unwholesome Kamma caused his thirst to be unquenchable even after he had drunk the entire vessel of water. The senior monk said to him, "Layman, what evil deeds have you committed that turn you into a Peta in this very lifetime?"

The words of the senior monk caused the hunter's sense of right and wrong to be awakened. He paid homage to the senior monk and threw away his hunting gear. He went home to check on his wife and children. He destroyed his spear, left the torch and all the trapped game in the forest. After all was said and done, he returned to the senior monk and requested to be ordained a Buddhist monk. After he became a monk, he was eager to learn the Buddha's Sayings. One day he heard the sermon on the Devadut Sutta which taught about punishment in the Hell Realm. He was seized with fear and asked the senior monk about the prescribed duties of a Buddhist monk. The senior monk told him that a Buddhist monk had two main duties namely Vipassana-dhura (The duty of contemplation) and Gantha-dhura (the duty of studying the Scriptures). The new monks felt that Gantha-dhura was for those with abilities and talents. Since his faith came out of his suffering, he opted for Vipassana-dhura by practicing meditation.

The senior monk taught Phra Malaka-tissa how to practice meditation. Later, Phra Malaka-tissa went to practice meditation at the Cittala-panpata Temple one day, at the Gamena-davasi Temple the next day, and at the Gocaragam Temple the following day. When Thina-middha (sloth and torpor) overtook him, he would put wet leaves on his head and put his feet in the water in order to stay awake. One day, he had been meditating all night at the Cittala-panpata Temple. Near dawn, he began to feel sleepy so he put wet leaves on his head. At the time, the novice monks were chanting the Aruna-vati Sutta but all he heard was "Be diligent, endeavor and persevere in the practice of the Dhamma. Destroy death like an elephant which destroys the house of reed. Whoever is not reckless in the Dhamma-Discipline will leave the round of rebirth and end suffering." Phra Malaka-tissa was overjoyed and felt the Lord Buddha's words to be directed at him especially. In his delight, he continued to meditate until he attained the Fruit of Never-Returning (Ana-gami-phla). He continued with his endeavor until he finally attained the Arahatsip.

All the misdeeds that Phra Malaka-tissa had committed as a hunter became Ahosi-kamma and would never give its consequences the instant he attained Arahatsip.

- 2) **Wholesome Ahosi-kamma:** It means wholesome deeds which are overdue, hence can no longer give their consequences. Wholesome Ahosi-kamma can be exemplified in the following story as recorded in the Tripitaka about the 'Yogi Kala-devila'.

The Yogi Kala-devila had attained the eighth level of meditative absorption. He was one of the teachers of King Suddho-dana, Prince Siddhattha's father. The Yogi's level of meditative absorption caused him to be reborn in the Brahma Realm to enjoy the bliss there for a very long, long time. His meditative absorption is considered to be Garuka-kamma. Although the Yogi attained respectively the first to the seventh level of meditative absorption, which are considered to be Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma, it became defunct as soon as the Yogi was able to attain the eighth level of meditative absorption. It was his eighth level of meditative absorption alone which caused him to be reborn in the Brahma Realm. The scenario can be compared to a person dining on eight tablespoons of rice. By the time he gets to the eighth spoonful, he is already full. The first to the seventh spoonfuls have a supporting role but the decisive role is the eighth spoonful.

The types of Kamma and the way they give their consequences as described in this chapter can be summarized as follows.

**Paka-kala-catu-kaka** means Kamma which gives its consequences as a function of time and is the third category of Kamma; the first category being Kicca-catu-kaka which gives its consequences as a function of its duty; and the second category being Paka-dana-pariyaya-catu-kaka which gives its consequences as a function of strength. There are four types of Paka-kala-catu-kaka as follows.

**Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma (Effective Kamma):** It gives its consequences in the present lifetime and can be compared to an annual plant. It possesses a weak force and can only give its consequences within one lifetime. Any unwholesome or wholesome Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma which an individual performs will result in suffering or happiness right here in the present lifetime.

**Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma (Subsequently Effective Kamma):** It gives its consequences in the next lifetime and can be compared to a biennial plant. It possesses a stronger force than Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma. It will only give its consequences in the next lifetime and its job is finished. Any unwholesome or wholesome Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma which an individual performs will cause him/her to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness or in the States of Happiness after he/she dies.

**Apara-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma (Indefinitely Effective Kamma):** It gives its consequences starting from the third lifetime from now and can be compared to a perennial plant. It possesses more force than Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma and Upa-pajja-veda-niya-kamma. When it is time for Apara-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma to give its consequences, it can continue to do so endlessly until such time as all defilements are removed and Arahathship is attained. Any unwholesome or wholesome Apara-pariyaya-veda-niya-kamma which an individual performs will cause him/her to experience suffering or happiness starting from the third lifetime onward.

**Ahosi-kamma (Defunct Kamma):** It does not give its consequences in the past, in the present or in the future. It can be compared to seeds which have been stored for too long or which have been roasted. When these seeds are sown, they cannot grow regardless of how fertile the soil may be or how much water may be available. Ahosi-kamma is Kamma which is overridden by more powerful Kamma and applies to both unwholesome and wholesome Ahosi-kamma.

The contents in this chapter should allow the student to better appreciate the complexity of the consequences of Kamma and how it is difficult for most people to understand the complex workings of the Law of Kamma. This lack of understanding causes many people to disbelieve in the Law of Kamma or in the Kamma Principle which states that one reaps what one sows. Such disbelief is very harmful and dangerous because it leads to recklessness. Every single one of our action waits for its time to give its consequences, it is only a matter of when and how it will give its consequences.

The student has now learnt the three different categories of Kamma and their respective functions. No one can escape the consequences of his Kamma as the Lord Buddha once said,

Once a person has performed an unwholesome deed, he can try to escape by air, to the middle of the ocean, to a gorge or to a far away land but he can never escape the consequences of his unwholesome deed.

Therefore, once we are fortunate enough to be reborn a human being, a form of existence which is most conducive to the accumulation of merit, we should not feel bad about our current life circumstances if we find them to be wanting but we should continue to regularly accumulate only wholesome deeds for the rest of our lives. We should abandon all unwholesome thoughts and keep our minds clear and bright all the time. This way we can hasten our past accumulated merit to give its blessings. And when it does, we will meet with increasing happiness and prosperity and whatever unwholesome deeds we performed in the past will not have any opportunity to give its consequences.

### **Exercises**

After the student finishes studying this chapter, please complete the test and exercises 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5 provided in the workbook before beginning Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6

# THE WAY BUDDHISM VIEWS THE CONCEPT OF WASHING AWAY ONE'S SIN

### Topics Covered in Chapter 6

#### **6.1 The Way Other Religious Beliefs View the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin**

- 6.1.1 The Need for Religion
- 6.1.2 The Way Christianity Views the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin
- 6.1.3 The Way Brahmanism or Hinduism Views the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin

#### **6.2 The Way Buddhism Views the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin**

- 6.2.1 The Meaning of Washing Away One's Sin or Demerit According to the Lord Buddha's Teachings
- 6.2.2 The Origin of Sin or Demerit According to the Lord Buddha's Teachings  
Sin or Demerit Occurs in Three Ways
- 6.2.3 Buddhism Denies the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin as Held in Other Religious Beliefs
- 6.2.4 Dissolving Sin or Demerit through the Accumulation of Merit
- 6.2.5 Washing Away One's Sin or Demerit by Observing the Precepts, Practicing Meditation, and Attaining Insight.

## Concepts

1. Christianity teaches that one is born with the Original Sin because Adam and Eve who were the first human beings incurred this sin by disobeying God. As a result of their disobedience, their descendants must inherit their sin. Hinduism teaches that one can wash away one's sin by bathing in a sacred river. These are but two examples of how different religions view the concept of washing away one's sin. The different teachings about sin and how to wash it away arose as a result of differences in social environment, beliefs, and attitudes.
2. Buddhism does not teach the concept of washing away one's sin or demerit per se but it teaches everyone to practice pure thoughts, pure words, and pure physical action. Buddhism teaches everyone to work toward ridding himself of all defilements because only the complete removal of one's defilements can make an individual pure as in the case of an Arahant. The reason is defilements are the causes of all sin or demerit. One can then wash away one's sin or demerit, so to speak, by ridding oneself completely of all defilements. However, once a misdeed is committed and results in demerit, one cannot wash away the consequences of that misdeed.
3. In Buddhism, the concept of washing away one's sin or demerit has more to do with the removal of defilements which are the causes of all physical, verbal, and mental misdeeds. The removal of defilements can be ultimately accomplished by following the Lord Buddha's Teachings, specifically the Noble Eightfold Path. This includes Samma-ditthi (Right View), Samma-sankappa (Right Thought), Samma-kammanta (Right Speech), Samma-ajiva (Right Livelihood), etc. The Noble Eightfold Path can be summarized into three practices which can ultimately lead to the complete removal of defilements. These include Precepts, mental discipline, and insight and can be put into practice by 1) Laying down one's life to meticulously observe the Precepts, 2) Practicing meditation, and 3) Developing insight. Once these three practices are carried out until one's Perfections can be cultivated to the fullest extent, one will attain the Threefold Knowledge especially Asavak-khaya-nana which is the Higher Knowledge of the cessation of mental intoxication. Once this Higher Knowledge is attained, it means that all of one's sin or demerit can be washed away completely.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the student to correctly compare the teachings about the concept of washing away one's sin as taught in different religious beliefs.
2. To enable the student to correctly describe the concept of washing away one's sin or demerit according to the Lord Buddha's Teachings.
3. To enable the student to correctly understand and describe the way one can truly wash away one's sin or demerit as taught in Buddhism.

## **THE WAY BUDDHISM VIEWS THE CONCEPT OF WASHING AWAY ONE'S SIN**

There are many religions on earth if we count all the major and minor religions but if we count only major religions which have provided a refuge to humankind and have a large number of followers all over the world, there are only three religions. These include Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. The fundamental teachings and practices of each of these religions differ tremendously from one to another.

Many religions on earth teach that God creates everything and provides a prophet to wash away the believers' sin. Believers can wash away their sin by confessing them or by bathing in a sacred river. A question has often been raised about whether it is true that one's sin can really be washed away. Therefore, in this chapter the way Buddhism views the concept of washing away one's sin will be presented.

Most students of this course are Buddhists and know that the Lord Buddha taught us to believe in the Law of Karma which states that we reap what we sow. If we perform good deeds, then we will receive good consequences. If we perform bad deeds, then we will receive bad consequences. It is necessary that we learn about the Lord Buddha's Teachings in regards to the concept of washing away one's sin or demerit and the means of purifying oneself and compare the Lord Buddha's Teachings with those in other religions. This way the student can gain a wider perspective of this concept and can better practice according to the Lord Buddha's Teachings by becoming increasingly careful not to commit any misdeed and by living his/her life in such a way that it will create happiness in his/her current and future lifetimes.

### **6.1 The Way Other Religious Beliefs View the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin**

In this topic, the student will learn about the need for religion. In terms of the concept of washing away one's sin, only the beliefs and the practices in Christianity and Hinduism will be mentioned here. This comparative study of different religious teachings is not for the purpose of emphasizing the superiority of one religion over another but for the purpose of understanding different teachings and perspectives. The information will allow the student to better compare the different religious teachings, hence to gain a wider perspective of these different religions.

### **6.1.1 The Need for Religion**

The student will first gain the fundamental understanding about why humanity needs religion in the first place so that a connection can be made about the concept of washing away one's sin as taught in other religions.

Humanity has always lived in social units starting from the smallest unit of the family. Human beings in the social units are related as parents, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, teachers, students, friends, etc. The main duty of each of the social members is to earn a living.

Human beings differ in looks, intelligence, economic standing, habits, etc. These individual differences are the manifestation of each individual's accumulated Kamma and the Law of Kamma. These differences in turn cause human beings to behave so differently that conflicts can arise. Conflicting thoughts and deeds cause quarrels and fights among members of the community. To enable human beings to live together in peace and happiness, it is necessary to have social rules in the forms of law, regulations, code of conduct, custom, tradition, which are appropriate to the particular social environment and time period.

The simple fact is whatever social rules that have ever been set up, human beings still have difficulty following them and these social rules can be transgressed and may eventually have to be canceled. The reason is these rules can only control the social members' physical and verbal acts but cannot control the behavior of the mind directly. The mind is the most important part of a human being because the origin of good or bad deeds starts with the mind.

Therefore, human beings need religion as a refuge, as a means of setting boundaries in terms of our physical, verbal, and mental behaviors. Religion plays a very important role in our lives. It enhances the quality of our lives and makes it possible for people to live together in peace and happiness. Every religion seeks to be its believers' refuge. The teachings and practice of each religion are different from one another and it is up to each individual to evaluate for himself which religion offers the most comprehensive view of the reality of existence, hence offers him the most benefits.

The concept of washing away one's sins is taken from different religions that teach about this concept. Each of these teachings offers a different viewpoint. Here we will confine our discussion to the teachings in Christianity and Brahmanism.



### 6.1.2 The Way Christianity Views the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin

Christianity is one of the leading religions that have many followers all around the world. Its teachings are based on monotheism and on the beliefs that there is only one God and it is this God who creates the world, human beings, and everything in the universe. This God gives human beings commandments through his prophets and heavenly messengers throughout the ages starting from Moses to Jesus.

The concept of washing away one's sin teaches people to develop very strong faith in their God whom they believe to have created everything. According to the teachings, God sent his son Jesus to be punished for the sin of humanity which has been inherited from Adam and Eve. Therefore, it is necessary to wash away one's sin.

Christianity practices five important rituals but here only the practice of washing away one's sin will be mentioned.

**Baptism:** is the ritual carried out when one is an infant or when one is first converted to Christianity. This practice is based on what Jesus did before he went out to preach the gospel. It is done only once in order to wash away the sin inherited from Adam and Eve. In Catholicism, the ritual is carried out by pouring holy water onto the individual's forehead. This ritual is very important because according to this belief whoever does not take part in it will not receive everlasting life. Baptism is the way to initiate a new believer into the faith.

**Confession:** Christianity teaches that whenever a member transgresses God's commandments and sin has been incurred, he/she must confess his/her sin so that he/she can be forgiven and his/her purity will be restored.

Going to confession is the way to wash away one's sin by confessing them to a priest and to promise that one will not commit such sinful acts again. In Catholicism, one must confess one's sin in front of the priest in genuine contrition because the priest is the Pope's representative who in turn represents Jesus. The priest will then admonish the confessor and tell him to do penance for his sin(s). Anyone that confesses his sin without genuine contrition is considered to have committed a grave sin.

The ritual begins with the explanation that any sin which has been committed can be negated through the confession of that sin to another person. The person listening to the confession must possess loving-kindness and is willing to accept the confession and to forgive the transgression. It is like what happens in a judicial court. When a criminal admits his guilt, the judge will lessen his sentence accordingly. The difference here is that in Christianity, once the sin is confessed, it is no more.

The practice of confessing one's sin began when Jesus went to heal the lepers and the blind with the power of his mind. The lepers were healed and the blind could see. Jesus said that the sick and the blind had been punished by God because of their sin and God alone could take away their sin. After having healed the lepers and the blind, Jesus

said to them, "We forgive you your sin." Another scripture says, "Your death and your second coming can cleanse all the souls of all sin. Please forgive us our transgressions."

Beginning in the year 1215, believers attend the ritual once a year. Certain orthodox beliefs do it four to five times a year. The ritual is carried out by kneeling in front of the altar. Once confession is over, the priest will put his cape on the individual's shoulders and pronounce him pure. It signifies that his sin has been washed away.

**In Roman Catholicism**, the priest will leave the individual to confess his sin alone by watching him from a distance. Or the priest may stay behind a curtain and the individual is outside while he confesses his sin. Once he is done, the priest will say to the individual from behind the curtain, "The Holy Spirit acknowledges your sin and forgives you your transgression." Some Catholics go to confession once a week.

**In the Protestant church**, confession is carried out as a group. Attendants sit together in front of the altar and say in unison, "Please forgive us and take away all of our sin." The minister then confesses the sin for the people by saying, "We did not do what we should do and we did what we should not do. God, have mercy on us." And the ritual is over.

Here, we intend only to present an overall picture of the practice and do not intend to delve into the detailed practices of different denominations.

### **6.1.3 The Way Brahmanism or Hinduism Views the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin**

Brahmanism or Hinduism is another religion which has subscribed to the practice of washing away one's sin since ancient times. Brahmanism is one of the oldest religions in the world and has been around for 4,000 years. It has undergone many changes throughout its history.

Brahmanism now believes in polytheism while it originally subscribed to monotheism and the worship of Brahma. As times passed, it has added many gods to the belief but there are three main gods which include Brahma, the creator; Shiva, the destroyer; and Vishnu, the preserver. The three gods are referred to as 'Trimurti'.

Brahmanism and Hinduism are the same religion. Hinduism came from Brahmanism, which had its beginning during the time period when the Aryans from the south of Russia invaded India and chased the Dravidians who were the natives of India out of their land. Many Dravidians fled to Sri Lanka and others married the Aryans and became the Indian people of the present days. The Aryans worshipped the sun whereas the Dravidians worshipped fire. The Aryans began to propagate the teaching that the sun is the hugest fireball and is bigger than any fire on earth. Therefore, everyone should worship the sun which was the source of all fire. And that was the beginning of the merging of native and Aryan beliefs into Brahmanism.

Brahmanism or Hinduism believes in the concept of washing away one's sin the way Christianity does but the practices are different. Details of the ritual are not known. It is known only that believers of Brahmanism believed that if they bathe in the Ganges, they will be purified. They believe the Ganges to be a sacred river flowing from the mouth of Brahma or Shiva that lives on Mount Kailas. Dying people are carried to the bank of the Ganges so that after they are cremated, their ashes can be strewn on the river so that their sin can be washed away for the last time. This practice is still prevalent today in India, and close to hundreds of thousand of people goes to the bank of the Ganges every year to wash away their sin.

## **6.2 The Way Buddhism Views the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin**

Buddhism teaches everyone to behave in a decent manner through the body, the words, and the thoughts so as not to harm oneself and others. Buddhism teaches about the Law of Kamma in that a good deed gives good consequences and a bad deed gives bad consequences. The Lord Buddha teaches that one's ultimate goal in life is the destruction of all of one's defilements, for the end of defilements means the end of all sin. However, the concept of washing away one's sin which existed in India before the Lord Buddha's time was not specifically mentioned in Buddhism.

Therefore, the student must learn about the way Buddhism views the concept of washing away one's sin to see how the Lord Buddha's Teachings differ from other religious teachings. The knowledge gained will enable the student to answer any question that others may have about the subject and to apply the knowledge to his/her daily life.

### **6.2.1 The Meaning of Washing Away One's Sin According to the Lord Buddha's Teachings**

Actually, the term 'washing away one's sin' was never mentioned in the Lord Buddha's Teachings because He stressed the importance of keeping one's action, words, and thoughts pure in order to ultimately remove one's defilements. Once a misdeed is committed, it incurs ill consequences as dictated by the Law of Kamma and such consequences cannot be washed away.

The term 'washing away or floating away one's sin' comes from Brahmanism. When the Lord Buddha was propagating the Dhamma, one method that He applied was to use whatever terms that already existed in Brahmanism such as the term 'washing away or floating away one's sin' but to give them a new and better meaning. He found that the method made it easier for believers of Brahmanism to be more receptive to the Dhamma. After the Brahmins heard the Dhamma, they were eventually converted to Buddhism.

The term 'washing away one's sin' comprises two main words; 'washing' and 'sin'. Since this concept is not used in Buddhism, it is important that we first clarify the meaning of these words in the context of Buddhism.

**Washing** means making something disappear by using water, fire, etc. There are different ways of making something disappear: to sweep something clean, to scrub something clean, to wash away the smell, all the way to genocide.

**Sin** or more correctly demerit means an action which causes a being to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. Sin or demerit means wickedness, wrongdoing, gloominess, a bad deed. Sin or demerit causes the wrongdoer to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. **Sin or demerit is the opposite of merit.**

Sin or demerit is also referred to as unwholesome deeds, indecent deeds, Black Dhamma.

**Sin** or demerit means evil, wickedness. In Buddhism, sin or demerit has three meanings as follows:

1. As applied to the state of mind: a sad and gloomy mind.
2. As applied to its cause: all forms of misdeed.
3. As applied to its consequences: all forms of suffering.

According to Buddhism, the word sin or demerit can be compared to something which is spoiled or damaged as in a damaged house, rotten food, etc. The terms 'being rotten, being damaged, being broken, decaying, being torn, being moldy, etc.,' can be grouped together as being spoiled, therefore, bad. The spoiled state of mind includes a sad and gloomy mind; an idle mind; a harmful mind; a black mind; a clouded mind, etc. These spoiled states of the mind which bring about sadness, gloominess, baseness, meanness can be called sin or demerit.

From the above description of the meaning of sin or demerit, it can be concluded that sin or demerit means the spoiled states of the mind.

When the words washing and sin or demerit are combined together, the term means the complete removal of defilements which are the causes of all sin or demerit. The fruit of such lofty endeavor is an ever increasing improvement of the mind which causes the body, the words, and the mind to be cleaner and purer until such time when all defilements can be completely removed. The term 'one who has washed away his sin' is mentioned in the **Dutiya-soceyaya Sutta** as follows:

Behold, monks, the word 'Soceya' means the three types of cleanliness. When an individual is clean in the body, in the word, and in the mind, is without defilements, and is clean with the cleanliness of virtue. The sages call such an individual a person who has washed away his sin.

From this verse in the Sutta, 'a person who has washed away his sin' means an individual who is able to destroy all defilements and is therefore clean and pure in the body, word, and mind. Washing away one's sin according to this Sutta implies the complete removal of all defilements which in turn gives rise to a person's cleanliness and purity.

### **6.2.2 The Origin of Sin According to the Lord Buddha's Teachings**

Now that the student has learnt about the different attitudes of different religions toward the concept of washing away one's sin, the belief about the origin of sin also differs with different religions. Monotheism and polytheism like Christianity and Brahmanism-Hinduism tend to believe that sin arises from disobeying God. For example, Christianity believes that Original Sin arose when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden apple in the Garden of Eden. They disobeyed God. It causes all of Adam and Eve's descendants to inherit this Original Sin. According to the teachings in Christianity, sin is inherited by blood. As a result, all newly born human beings must be baptized. It also teaches that God has the power to forgive all sin through redemption under the stipulation that one must be faithful to God alone.

However, the Lord Buddha, who penetrated the reality of existence and possessed true knowledge about the working mechanism of the law of nature, allowed Him to know the nature of defilements and the fact that defilements are the cause of all sin or demerit. He also knew how these defilements could be completely destroyed.

The Lord Buddha summarized the origin of sin or demerit succinctly as follows:

Natthi papan akub-bato

Sin cannot be incurred by someone who does not commit it.

Attana va katan papan attana sanki-lissati

Whoever commits a misdeed, his mind will be sad and gloomy.

Attana akatan papan attana va visuj-jhati

Whoever does not commit a misdeed is pure.

These sayings of the Lord Buddha confirm the fact that sin or demerit is personal and cannot be inherited. Whoever commits a misdeed will receive its ill consequences. Whoever does not commit a misdeed is free from its ill consequences. If the father commits a misdeed, the demerit incurred is his alone and cannot be passed on to his children. It is in the same manner that when a father eats, his children cannot become full. Buddhism teaches that demerit is incurred as a result of the individual's misdeed which is in turn caused by the defilements in his mind. His misdeed will eat away at his mind and cause it to become sad, gloomy, and clouded. A tormented mind will lack efficiency.

### 6.2.3 Sin or Demerit Occurs in Three Ways

Sin or demerit arises from defilements which are inherent in the mind in the forms of greed, anger, and ignorance. Defilements force human beings to commit misdeeds through the body, the word, and the mind. Once a misdeed is committed, the mind becomes troubled. A troubled mind is sad and gloomy. According to Buddhism, there are ten ways to commit misdeeds. These are called 'The Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action'. It includes three physical acts, four verbal acts, and three mental acts as follows:

1. **The three physical acts** are the three types of misdeeds which are committed through the body and include:
  - (1) **Pana-tipata** (Taking the life of another living being)
  - (2) **Adina-dana** (Stealing)
  - (3) **Kame-sumiccha-cara** (Committing sexual misconduct)
  
2. **The four verbal acts** are the four types of misdeeds which are committed verbally and include:
  - (4) **Musa-vada** (Lying)
  - (5) **Pisuna-vaca** (Practicing divisive speech)
  - (6) **Pharusa-vaca** (Practicing offensive speech)
  - (7) **Samphap-palapa** (Practicing nonsensical speech)
  
3. **The three mental acts** are the misdeeds which are committed mentally in the forms of:
  - (8) **Abhij-jha** (Covetousness)
  - (9) **Bya-pada** (Ill will)
  - (10) **Miccha-ditthi** (Wrong View)

Since there are three channels by which sin or demerit can occur, it should behoove us to be very careful and to restrain our body, words, and thoughts so as not to commit any misdeed by practicing 'The Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action'. It consists of ten ways to practice honesty through our body, our words, and our thoughts as taught by the Lord Buddha in the Cunda Sutta as follows:

Once, our Lord Buddha was staying in the mango grove belonging to Cunda-kammara-putra. This man was talking about cleanliness and the way Brahmins practiced cleanliness which was different from that of Ariyans or holy individuals.

The Lord Buddha answered that Ariyans or holy individuals become filthy as a result of dishonest deeds committed through the body, the words, and the thoughts.

The way Ariyans or holy individuals practice cleanliness through the body is by not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct.

The way Ariyans or holy individuals practice cleanliness through the words is by abstaining from lying, from practicing divisive speech, from practicing offensive speech, from practicing nonsensical speech.

The way Ariyans or holy individuals practice cleanliness through the thoughts is by the absence of covetousness, the absence of ill will, and having Right View.

This Sutta teaches that we can keep our self clean in three ways which include our body, our word, and our thought. In the same token, there are three main channels through which sin or demerit can occur.

#### **6.2.4 Buddhism Denies the Concept of Washing Away One's Sin as Held in Other Religious Beliefs.**

In regards to the religious belief that sin is inherited and newly born human beings must be baptized or the religious belief about a savior who was born to redeem other human beings, the Lord Buddha had the following to say:

Suddhi asuddhi paccattan

Purity or impurity is a personal concern.

Nanano annan viso-dhaye

No one can redeem others from sin.

The Lord Buddha teaches that one individual's sin cannot be passed onto another individual. The Lord Buddha also teaches that once an individual commits a misdeed, no one else can redeem him from its ill consequences.

In regards to the religious belief that one can wash away one's sin by bathing in the sacred river, the Lord Buddha negated such belief as shown in the **Vatthu-pama Sutta** as follows.

Once our Lord Buddha was staying in the great Jetavana Temple near the city of Savatthi, a Brahmin by the name of Sundrika-bhara-davaja (who believed in the concept of washing away one's sin in the sacred river) was seated near Him. The Brahmin heard the Lord Buddha talk about internal bathing so he asked the Lord Buddha, "Is the Exalted One going to the Pahuka River to bathe?"

The Lord Buddha answered, "What good can come from bathing in the Pahuka River?" The Brahmin said, "The Pahuka River is widely known to be sacred and can impart purity to those that bathe in it as their sin is floated away."

The Lord Buddha said, "Indecent, sinful folk travel to the Pahuka River, to the Gaya River, to the Adhi-kakka Landing, to the Sundrika River, to the Sarasdi River, to the Pyaga Landing, or to the Bahu-madi River. Although they do it regularly, they still cannot become pure. None of these rivers can ever cleanse one from one's retribution, from one's base action which results in a misdeed but cleanliness is achieved by decent individuals that perform only deeds of purity. You should bathe in my teachings and cause delight in others by not lying, not killing, not stealing, by having Right View, and by not being miserly. Then there will be no need for you to bathe or drink in the Gaya River."

### **A Few Main Points Can Be Derived from This Sutta:**

1. The act of bathing regardless of where, how, or what the source of the water may be, it is but a neutral action. There is no merit or demerit attached to the act. It can only cleanse the body but it cannot cleanse the mind.
2. If water can wash away one's sin, then all the aquatic animals would have all been cleansed and purified and could all go to the Celestial Realm. But the fact remains that aquatic animals subsist by eating each other as food.
3. Sin or demerit is inherent in the mind. It is a mental factor and cannot be washed away by using a physical substance like water. Only the Dhamma which deals with the mind can cleanse such mental factor as sin or demerit. The mind can be cleansed by practicing charity, keeping the Precepts, and practicing meditation. The more these practices are earnestly performed, the purer one's mind will become.



4. Individuals who are still committing misdeeds, who are still harming others, can bathe themselves in the so-called holy water all they want and they will never become clean. Their bodies are still unclean because they are still committing physical dishonesty. Their words are still unclean because they are still committing verbal dishonesty. Their minds are still unclean because they still harbor greed, ill-will, and Wrong View. When an individual abstains from all misdeeds and regularly accumulates merit, he is clean even though he does not bathe in any holy water.

The material covered in this topic should enable the student to better understand how Buddhism views the concept of washing away one's sin. The Lord Buddha did not mention the concept directly but His Teachings are about purifying the mind until such time that all defilements can be removed from it.

### **6.2.5 Dissolving Sin or Demerit through the Accumulation of Merit**

Here the point about making merit in order to dissolve sin or demerit will be made, since the concept has been mentioned in many books concerning the Law of Kamma. It is generally understood that once sin or demerit occurs as a result of a misdeed and ill consequences are incurred, that sin or demerit cannot be washed away. This understanding is correct when sin or demerit means the ill consequences of a misdeed. However, according to the knowledge about the Law of Kamma, the emphasis is on the removal of defilements, which are the root cause of sin or demerit.

Although the Lord Buddha taught us to abandon wickedness, to perform good deeds, to keep our mind bright and clear so that we can eventually destroy all of our defilements, however, in the course of our daily life, most of us perform a mixture of good and bad deeds. Therefore, when our misdeeds give their consequences, they will not be able to do so in a continuous manner because they will be interrupted by our good deeds which will also give their consequences. Good and bad deeds will jostle with each other to give their consequences but the pattern is unique to each individual's overall Kamma. Sometimes an individual may have been making real progress in life when his past misdeeds suddenly cause him to meet with obstacles. In the case where an individual performs more bad deeds than good deeds, how can he then go about improving his situation, since the consequences of his misdeeds cannot be washed away?

The Lord Buddha taught us to perform good deeds on a regular and continuous basis. When this is done to the fullest extent and defilements are completely destroyed then the true deed of a human being is done. Therefore, according to the Lord Buddha, to undo one's unwholesome deeds, one must first realize the harm of one's unwholesome deed and admit to one's wrongdoing. One must then be determined not to commit the same misdeed again. Next, one must learn to accumulate more and more good deeds so that one becomes accustomed to doing good deeds. Once one can accumulate more and more merit through one's ever-increasing number of good deeds, it will cause the consequences of sin or misdeeds to be left far behind. Buddhist scholars called this pathway 'the way to

dissolve sin or demerit'. It is the way to make sin or demerit more dilute or less potent. Without the merit earned by performing good deeds, sin or demerit can easily give its consequences. Once sin or demerit begins to give its ill consequences, the situation will make it difficult for one to perform good deeds to the fullest extent. This method of dissolving sin or demerit is mentioned in the Lonaka Sutta as follows:

“Behold, monks, if one puts a lump of salt in a small cup of water, would you suppose the water would be so salty as to be undrinkable?” The monks answered, “Indeed, it would be so, Most Exalted One.” The Lord Buddha asked, “Why is that?” The monks answered, “It’s because there’s only a small amount of water.” The Lord Buddha said, “What if one puts the same lump of salt but this time in the Ganges, would you suppose the water would be so salty as to be undrinkable?” The monks answered, “No, it would not be, Most Enlightened One.” The Lord Buddha asked, “And why is that?” The monks answered, “It’s because there’s so much water in the Ganges that just one lump of salt cannot cause the water in it to become salty.” The Lord Buddha said, “In the same manner, monks, some individuals commit a small amount of misdeed yet it can cause them to have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. For some individuals, the same small amount of misdeed becomes *Dittha-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma* (Kamma which gives its consequences within the present lifetime) therefore, has a very light effect.”

This Sutta teaches that we can dilute the consequences of our misdeed by deliberately accumulating a great amount of merit. The accumulation of merit has the effect of adding more water whereas the accumulation of demerit has the effect of adding more salt as in the analogy above. Therefore, we must regularly accumulate merit in order to offset our demerit. It is like a lump of salt being dissolved in more and more water until its saltiness cannot be tasted. Yet the salt is still there in the water.

Nonetheless, there are those of us who in spite of knowing what constitutes a good deed, still refuse to perform it because they have succumbed to the force of their defilements. In this case, it is nearly impossible for them to dissolve their sin or demerit. It is best in any case not to commit any misdeed at all or to commit as few misdeeds as possible. We should make it a habit to think and consider everything thoroughly before we say or do anything.

### **6.2.6 Washing Away One's Sin or Demerit by Observing the Precepts, Practicing Meditation, and Attaining Insight.**

Here we will learn about the way to wash away our sin or demerit as taught by the Lord Buddha. The ultimate aim of the Lord Buddha's Teachings is the destruction of all defilements which will cause our body, our word, and our mind to be pure. We will then be free from suffering and our lives will be perfect. Moreover, we will no longer undergo the round of rebirth.

The Lord Buddha's Teachings are contained in 84,000 Scriptures as recorded in the Tripitaka. These Teachings can be summarized as the Noble Eightfold Path which consists of the following eight components:

1. **Samma-ditthi (Right View):** It means having right understanding about reality such as the facts that we owe our parents a great depth of gratitude; a good deed gives good consequences and a bad deed gives bad consequences; the Celestial Realm and the Hell Realm exist; this world and the hereafter exist; the higher truth about suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the means of ending suffering exist.
2. **Samma-sankappa (Right Thought):** It means not thinking about sensual pleasures; it means thinking about having no ill-will; thinking about not harming others; thinking about not causing trouble for others.
3. **Samma-vaca (Right Speech):** It means not lying; not practicing divisive speech; not practicing offensive speech; not practicing nonsensical speech; not being boastful.
4. **Samma-kammanta (Right Action):** It means not killing; not stealing; practicing chastity.
5. **Samma-ajiva (Right Livelihood):** It means earning one's living by engaging in honest work.
6. **Samma-vayama (Right Effort):** It means preventing unwholesome deeds from occurring; abandoning current unwholesome deeds; making new forms of merit; continuing to perform existing wholesome deeds.
7. **Samma-sati (Right Mindfulness):** It means not allowing one's mind to wander aimlessly. It means that one is constantly aware of the inner physical form which resides within another inner physical form, each inner thought which exists within another inner thought, each inner Dhamma which exists within another inner Dhamma.
8. **Samma-samadhi (Right Concentration):** It means keeping one's concentration at the center of one's body in order to follow each inner physical form which exists within another inner physical form, each inner thought which exists within another inner thought, each inner Dhamma which exists within another inner Dhamma until one can respectively attain different levels of meditative absorption and proceeds from the mundane to the supramundane level of meditative attainments.

The practice of the Noble Eightfold Path leads one out of suffering. It is the principle method for washing away one's sin or demerit and can be summarized into the threefold training which includes morality, concentration, and wisdom as follows:

- **Samma-vaca, Samma-kammanta, and Samma-ajiva: Precepts**
- **Samma-vayama, Samma-sati, and Samma-samadhi: Concentration**
- **Samma-ditthi and Samma-sankappa: Wisdom**

The Teachings of the Lord Buddha can also be summarized as abstaining from misdeeds, performing good deeds, and keeping the mind bright and clear. This threefold training can be considered the heart of Buddhism. The Lord Buddha stressed this threefold training to the Buddhist monks very often because its earnest practice can lead to the destruction of defilements, hence, the washing away of one's sin.

### **Practices that Lead to the Washing Away of One's Sin**

- 1) **Value the Precepts More than One's Life:** Diligently train oneself by disciplining one's body, word, and mind so as to keep them pure. One keeps the Five Precepts on regular days and the Eight Precepts on Holy Days. Novice monks must keep the Ten Precepts and the Buddhist monks must keep the 227 Precepts. One must be willing to lay down one's life for the sake of Precepts because the Precepts are like the path which leads the practitioners directly to his destination.

#### **Precepts Has To Do with Cleanliness**

According to the Lord Buddha's Teachings, cleanliness brought about by the Precepts is not at the superficial level but at the deep level. The Lord Buddha taught that "A person can bathe himself 100 times a day but if he still kills, steals, commits sexual misconduct, that person is still not considered to have a clean body. A person can brush his teeth 1,000 times a day but if he still lies, practices nonsensical speech, gossips, that person is not considered to have a clean mouth."

Therefore, in Buddhism cleanliness means physical cleanliness, verbal cleanliness, and mental cleanliness which arise from keeping the Precepts. It is the type of cleanliness that protects us from physical misdeed, verbal misdeed, and mental misdeed.

The Lord Buddha teaches that "Physical cleanliness, verbal cleanliness, and mental cleanliness are true cleanliness." Precepts allow us to abandon all unwholesomeness and to keep our life flawless. This is the first level of decency and can also be considered as the first stage in the process of washing away one's sin.

- 2) **Train the Mind by Practicing Meditation:** Discipline the mind by keeping it continuously tranquil in accordance with the Four Foundations of Mindfulness by contemplating the body, the feelings, the mind, and the mind objects until Higher Knowledge or Vijja is attained. It is crucially important to discipline the mind because every action begins with an intention. The mind is the boss. The mind is king. Everything can be accomplished because of the mind. Therefore, if the mind is properly disciplined, it can control the action of the body.

### **Meditation Has To Do with Brightness**

If inner brightness or inner illumination does not occur then the Noble Paths, which begin with the First Path Sphere and all the way to the Dhammakaya, cannot be attained. How bright must this inner brightness be? This inner brightness can be compared to the brightness of the midday sun. But the level of brightness needed to access the details of one's past existences has to be as bright as the sky filled with hundreds, thousands, and countless number of suns. The greater the brightness, the more pronounced and the purer the insight will be. The Lord Buddha had the following to say about the brightness that occurs through meditation practice (as recorded in the **Upak-kilesa Sutta**).

Behold Anuruddha, I know this. Anytime my meditation power is low, that's the time I can see only a little. When I experience only a small amount of brightness, I can see only a little. But anytime that my meditation power is immeasurable, that's the time I can see immeasurably well and the amount of brightness is also immeasurable. I can see an immeasurable number of forms all night, all day or all night and all day long.

Meditation practice is considered a medium level of decency. It enables us to better lead our lives within the framework of the Precepts. Our mind can more effectively keep our physical and verbal deeds pure. The meticulous keeping of the Precepts controls our physical and verbal acts and make them purer. Precepts are instrumental in keeping our mind still to a certain extent. The more we practice meditation, the more we can still our mind and the brighter our mind becomes. Precepts and meditation practice support each other. Meditation practice can be considered as the second stage in the process of washing away one's sin.

**3) Develop True Wisdom:** True wisdom leads us to the truth and controls all of our behavior. It releases the mind from the clutch of ignorance. It causes the mind to be tranquil, spacious, and free. Wisdom is developed from meditation practice. Once meditation practice gives rise to inner brightness, the higher the brightness level, the more wisdom is increased, and the more Higher Knowledge is gained.

### **Wisdom Has To Do with Tranquility**

Tranquility in this case does not mean wisdom which comes from memorization or from thinking but from the Dhamma within us. Wisdom which comes from the Dhamma within allows the truth to be witnessed. The more truth one can witness, the more tranquil the mind will be. One realizes how limited the physical eye is and how small the world really is. In seeing with the physical eye, the vision is only 180 degrees but when we close our eyes to look inward, our mind can be expanded until it covers the entire world and much more. When we use our inner eye, the world is only the size of a gooseberry. The Lord Buddha had the following to say about inner peace (as recorded in the **Pathama-rohi-tassa Sutta**).

The end of the worlds cannot be reached however much time it takes. However as long as one cannot reach the end of the worlds, one cannot escape suffering. However, one who has attained insight and gained the truth about the worlds; one who has already reached the end of the worlds; one who has practiced chastity; is tranquil and no longer desires the things of the worlds.

Once one observes the Precepts more and more meticulously, one's mind will become bright and clear. One's Insight Sphere will be bright and one can see life for what it truly is. One understands suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the way to end suffering. One does not fall prey to one's inherent defilements and can abstain from all forms of misdeed. One can eventually be emancipated from defilements which are the root cause of demerit and attain Nibbana. Developing true wisdom can be considered as the final stage in the process of washing away one's sin.

Buddhism's view on the process of washing away one's sin is somewhat complicated and cannot be adequately explained. Nonetheless, the material covered here in this chapter should give the student some understanding about the subject. Although the Lord Buddha did not teach the subject directly but the ultimate aim of His Teachings is to enable each individual to completely remove defilements from his mind. Once an individual is free from defilements, he is naturally flawless and pure and can be said to be without sin.

In this chapter, the student has also learnt about the way to wash away one's sin by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path, which can be summarized into the threefold training of Precepts, meditation, and insight. Physical and verbal cleanliness reflects a clean mind and causes the practitioner to be bright both on the outside and the inside. Physical and verbal cleanliness which results from keeping the Precepts and the brightness within which results from meditation practice in turn allows one to develop tranquility as a result of insight. Insight helps one to be constantly aware of defilements which are the causes of all misdeeds. This vigilance allows defilements inherent in the mind to be scrubbed away until eventually the mind is scrubbed completely clean of them. When that happens, sin is washed away and purity of the mind becomes a permanent state as in the case of Arahats.

The Law of Kamma is a subject that everyone must learn and understand thoroughly. The Law of Kamma operates at every level and in everything in life. If we make a mistake by committing a misdeed, we will receive its ill consequences both in this and future lifetimes. If one has made many mistakes in the past, one must take heed and hurry to accumulate as many good deeds as possible to dilute the effects of one's misdeeds. At the same time, one must completely abandon all misdeeds in order to have a safe journey within the round of rebirth. Ultimately, one must aim to rid oneself of all defilements so that one can eventually attain Nibbana.

## **Exercises**

After the student finishes studying Chapter 6, please complete the test at the end of the chapter and exercises 6.1, 6.2 provided in the workbook before proceeding to Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 7

# CASE STUDIES IN THE LAW OF KAMMA

### **Topics Covered in Chapter 7**

**7.1 All Beings Are Uniquely Different as a Result of Their Uniquely Different Kamma**

**7.2 True Stories about Life in the Hereafter as Dictated by the Law of Kamma**

7.2.1 The Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action

7.2.2 The Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action



## Concepts

1. Rebirth of human beings and all other beings occurs as a result of each being's wholesome and unwholesome Kamma that had been accumulated throughout each being's countless existences. Past wholesome and unwholesome Kamma causes each human being to be uniquely different both in the current existence and in the hereafter. Therefore, life does not end with death because rebirth continues on as dictated by each being's overall Kamma.
2. The different case studies as given in the Inner Dreams Kindergarten are real life stories which have been submitted by real people. These case studies allow us to get an overall picture of how the Law of Kamma works. They help us to more deeply understand the theoretical part of the course material. They also show clearly that the Law of Kamma is real and the consequences of Kamma are real. Every person must receive the consequences of his/her own Kamma. This applies to the Lord Buddha and all the Arahats as well. Everyone is under the dictate of the Law of Kamma and no one can escape it.
3. Since we are fortunate enough to be reborn in the Human Realm in this existence, we should not waste any time feeling sorry for our self or for our life condition but we must hurry to perform only wholesome deeds from this moment onward. We have only a finite amount of time in this world and death awaits every one of us. Once death comes, our opportunity to perform wholesome deeds will be over. Moreover, no one else can help us or redeem us except for our self.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to gain a practical understanding about the Law of Kamma.
2. To enable the student to describe the way the Law of Kamma works, to explain how it affects every single aspect of our life and how it causes us to be uniquely different.
3. To enable the student to live life correctly and in accordance with the Law of Kamma.

## CASE STUDIES IN THE LAW OF KAMMA

From the material covered in this course so far, we have learnt that the Law of Kamma is a universal law which contains definite rules. These are iron rules. While some people under certain circumstances can escape the entire system of rules which everyone else in a country or society must obey, no one however can escape the Law of Kamma. We may have heard that in certain court cases, the criminals cannot be successfully convicted due to a lack of evidence and the criminals are released back into society.

As a result, these wicked individuals can continue to wreak havoc in society. Many of these individuals are wealthy and powerful and can bribe their way out of the hand of the law. The complicated workings of the Law of Kamma make many individuals doubt the consequences of Kamma. They wonder if it is true that **one reaps what one sows**. This doubt is widespread especially among individuals that have to eke out a living. Some of whom eventually resort to wrong livelihood.

The truth is the Law of Kamma operates all the time and **one does reap what one sows**. It is like a boomerang that always returns to the person that throws it. Everyone is responsible for his/her own action. If one performs a bad deed, one must receive its ill consequences. No one else can take away from him/her these ill consequences. If one performs a good deed, one will definitely receive its good consequences. The images of good or bad deeds will appear to the individual either right before his/her death (as a **Kamma Sign**) or in front of the Celestial Judge in the hell realm of Yomalok after his/her death. These images of good or bad deeds serve as clear and binding evidence which can never be denied.

An individual may be able to escape the judgment of societal law on earth but will never be able to escape the Law of Kamma. He/she will most certainly receive the ill consequences of his/her unwholesome deeds. It is only a matter of time and circumstances.

An individual who diligently accumulates wholesome deeds on a regular basis will most certainly receive the good consequences of his/her wholesome deeds. In the same manner, an individual that intentionally commits misdeeds regularly or an individual that performs a mixture of good and bad deeds, he/she will receive the consequences of his/her action accordingly. For the sake of our present and future happiness, it is best that we accumulate only wholesome deeds and abstain completely from all misdeeds. Let our mind be filled with only images of our wholesome deeds.

The case studies cited in this chapter were presented in the Inner Dreams Kindergarten to give us a deeper appreciation of how the Law of Kamma works. They should serve to remind us not to be reckless, not to commit any misdeed but to perform ever increasing wholesome deeds so that merit can be continuously accumulated.

## **7.1 All Beings Are Uniquely Different as a Result of Their Uniquely Different Kamma**

The material covered so far in this course shows that life does not end at death. What actually happens at death is that the physical body is deserted but the consciousness continues to undergo the round of rebirth as propelled by the individual's overall Kamma. The Lord Buddha had the following to say about this subject.

Behold, Brahmins and wealthy householders, some groups of beings in this world go to the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Place of Suffering, the Hell Realm after they die because they have not practiced the Dhamma. Behold, Brahmins and wealthy householders, some groups of beings in this world go to the Celestial Realm, the States of Happiness after they die because they have practiced the Dhamma.

The Lord Buddha teaches that human beings and other living beings have undergone countless rebirths. The condition of each of the existences is defined by the overall Kamma of the individual being involved. Each individual being's overall wholesome and unwholesome deeds or overall Kamma is uniquely different. In this regard, human beings can be divided into three categories as follows:

- 1. Human Beings Who No Longer Have Any Defilements Left:** These individuals will go to neither the Hell Realm nor the Celestial Realm. They will only go to Nibbana and will undergo no more rebirths. Such individuals include the Lord Buddha and the Arahats.
- 2. Human Beings Who Have Accumulated a Lot of Unwholesome Deeds:** These individuals are destined for the Hell Realm and will receive horrific forms of punishment there for an unimaginably long time. When it is finally time for them to be reborn a human being, their residual evil Kamma will cause them to be afflicted with genetic diseases while they are still in their mother's womb. They will be the cause of additional hardship in their parents' lives and their own lives will be plagued with suffering.

**3. Human Beings Who Have Accumulated a Lot of Wholesome Deeds:**

These individuals are destined for the Celestial Realm. After their merit is spent, their residual merit will cause them to be reborn a human being. They will be healthy while they are in their mother's womb. They will be born to loving and wealthy parents. They will be smart and easy to raise. They will be healthy and content. And no one will ever think of harming them.

Human beings in this world are so uniquely different in terms of looks, economical and social status, habits, level of intelligence, etc. These differences arise from the uniqueness of each individual's overall Kamma as already described in detail in Chapter 2.

Life and its vicissitudes are a result of our past and present deeds. We are the ultimate designer of our life and it is up to us to hurry and perform only wholesome deeds from this day onward. We cannot delay because death can come at any moment and our time on earth is severely limited. To further emphasize the importance of the Law of Kamma, hence our every deed past and present, we will now study life in the hereafter of different individuals as presented in the Inner Dreams Kindergarten. The cases will be presented according to the Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action and the Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action. This will help the student to more deeply understand the advantages and disadvantages of these two Dhamma principles. The knowledge gained will enable the student to live his/her life to the very best of his/her ability.

## **7.2 True Stories about Life in the Hereafter as Dictated by the Law of Kamma**

Buddhism teaches that an individual's overall Kamma causes each living being to be uniquely different. Past misdeeds cause a being to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe. Some beings are born as animals, some as Petas (Hungry Ghosts), and others as hell beings or Asurakayas (Thirsty Ghosts). On the contrary, past good deeds cause beings to be reborn in the States of Happiness. Some beings are born as humans, some as celestial beings, and others as Brahma Beings. Some are able to attain Arahatsip.

Knowledge about Kamma and the Law of Kamma is necessary because it helps us to live our lives accordingly. Most importantly, the knowledge gained allows us to steer our self away from the States of Unhappiness and toward the States of Happiness. The Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action leads one to the States of Unhappiness whereas the Tenfold Wholesome Course of Action leads one to the States of Happiness. The first group of case studies as presented in the Inner Dreams Kindergarten involves the Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action.

### 7.2.1 The Tenfold Unwholesome Course of Action

Unwholesome course of action gives rise to unwholesome Kamma which leads one to the States of Unhappiness. There are ten categories of unwholesome Kamma as follows:

1. **Pana-tipata:** It means taking the life of another living being such as killing an animal, killing a human being. It includes harming others by various means such as bodily injury, imprisonment, physical and mental forms of torture.
2. **Adina-dana:** It means taking what belongs to others and includes stealing, corruption, fraud, infringing on another person's rights, etc.
3. **Kame-sumiccha-cara:** It means committing sexual misconduct

The above three categories of unwholesome Kamma are considered physical Kamma.

4. **Musa-vada:** It means the practice of false speech.
5. **Pisuna-vaca:** It means the practice of divisive speech which causes disharmony and division.
6. **Pharusa-vaca:** It means the practice of offensive language.
7. **Samphap-palapa:** It means the practice of nonsensical speech, gossiping.

The above four categories of unwholesome Kamma are considered verbal Kamma.

8. **Abhij-jha:** It means covetousness.
9. **Bya-pada:** It means ill-will.
10. **Miccha-ditthi:** It means having the wrong view about the reality of the worlds.

The above three categories of unwholesome Kamma are considered mental Kamma.

## **Panatipata (Killing)**

It occurs when an individual intends to kill an identity which he knows to be alive physically and to possess feeling, perception, conditioned things, and consciousness.

### **Case Studies in Panatipata**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on February 7, B.E. 2547). A man had a motorcycle accident and was taken to the hospital. He later died in the hospital at the age of 21.

This man had a short life-span in this existence because in one past existence, he had a fight with another man and later went with his friends to ambush and kill this man.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on January 1, B.E. 2547). A man was honest and hard-working and disliked going into debt. He was a virtuous man and he taught school for a living. When he was younger, he used to drink, smoke, and committed sexual misconduct. His wife ran away because she could no longer tolerate his unwholesome way.

After he had children however, he began to study the Dhamma because he felt he needed to be a good role model for his children. He stopped drinking and smoking. He kept the Five Precepts on a regular basis and taught his children to do the same. He did morning chanting every day. During the Rains-Retreat, he would when he could go to the temple to keep the Eight Precepts.

In addition, he was a leader in merit-making activities and led others to accumulate merit. He had accumulated every form of merit possible. He also volunteered to teach the Dhamma to two groups of students. Students' behavior improved as a result. Some students stopped playing cards for money. Some students began to help their parents with the chores. Some students abstained from killing.

Later the man was diagnosed as having a distended artery. His urine turned dark yellow and he was told that he was suffering from the last phase of liver cancer. The cancer had already metastasized and spread to the lymph nodes, the lung, and the kidneys. However, he was not perturbed by the diagnoses but continued to increase his meditation practice. His wife reminded him often of all the forms of merit which he had made. As a result, he did not experience severe pain. He lost a lot of weight and his skin turned very dark and he finally died.

The man suffered from cancer in the liver and gallbladder, and had his artery operated on in this existence because in one past existence he was a soldier. He killed many enemy soldiers by stabbing them in the liver, in the kidneys or in the lung. His skin turned very dark because of his unwholesome verbal Karma. When he was a soldier, he used to tease his fellow soldiers about their dark skin, which caused them to be irritated.

**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on December 28, B.E. 2547). There was a man who enjoyed helping out at different temples. He also enjoyed gambling at a cock-fighting meet from time to time. He also lent money to people. Later, he suffered from a skin condition where his skin peeled and he would feel itchy and painful all over his body. His skin turned pink when ordinarily he had a very dark complexion. He eventually died peacefully.

The man's skin peeled and turned pink in this existence because in one past existence, he used to roast live animals such as live fish over the fire.

**Case Study No. 4** (Aired on June 30, B.E. 2548). There were twin sisters that behaved more like men. They did not live very long because they were killed in the same car accident.

The twins were in a car accident and died when they were still young in this existence because in one past existence they were both promiscuous men. When a woman became pregnant by either one of them, she would be ordered to have an abortion. Once, after they had had a lot to drink, they had a fight with a man and eventually ended up killing the man.

**Case Study No. 5** (Aired on April 16, B.E. 2546). A man who was in good health went to sleep one night and never woke up. He died at the age of 47.

The man died at 47 years old in this existence because in one past existence, he once ordered the slaughtering of pigs, chicken, and cattle to feed the guests at his daughter's wedding. In another past lifetime, he was a soldier and had killed enemy soldiers.

## **Adinnadana (Stealing)**

Stealing means taking what is precious to its owner without permission. What is stolen can be in the house, in the wood, dropped or misplaced, etc. The individual that steals it has the intention to take it knowing that it is precious to its owner.

### **Case Studies in Adinnadana**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on May 15, B.E. 2547). A woman is generous, courageous, hard-working, and persistent. She had gone to conduct different kinds of business in the United States but ended up with losses every time. Later she switched to real estate but again encountered losses. Later, she became a card dealer in a casino and still found herself financially broke. She had no money for gasoline, for rent, or food. She quit the job as a card dealer and finally opened a beauty shop. The beauty shop is still operating today.

This woman loves her siblings and relatives and has brought many of them to the United States. She supported them by sending them to school or finding them jobs. Yet, no one seems to appreciate her generosity or her efforts. Everyone seems to view her negatively including her employees to whom she has paid just as good a salary as any other employer in the same field.

This woman failed at business very often in this existence because in one past lifetime, she was a man and worked as a tax collector. Sometimes he overtaxed the people and used the extra money to fund his private enterprise. Sometimes he falsified the numbers in the book. She did accumulate some merit in certain past existences and this allows her to meet with business success later on.

Her generosity and efforts have not been appreciated and has been viewed negatively because of the misdeed of overtaxing people as a tax collector.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on December 4, B.E. 2547). There was a hard-working, clever man who owned a manufacturing plant. He liked to help others by offering them financial help or advice. But he ended up being deceived and cheated by those whom he had helped and had to repay their debts for them.

This man was deceived and cheated and had to repay other people's debts in this existence because in one past existence, he was a merchant. He went into business with a friend but later when the business was going well, he refused to give his friend his share of the profit. Moreover, he took everything for himself by lying to his friend and business partner that the business had failed.



**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on March 1, B.E. 2548). A man taught school for a living. Twenty years earlier he and his wife started a special tutoring facility. Most people were under the impression that this teacher was wealthy when in fact, he was not. The truth was he had often been taken advantaged of. But his financial situation was much improved currently.

This teacher and his wife was often taken advantaged of and did not have much money in the past but were better off in the present because in one past existence, they used to take advantage of their business partner. Later in that existence, they made merit by contributing to the Buddhist Cause and by giving to charity causes. In this existence, once their past negative Kamma lost much of its strength, their past merit caused their financial situation to improve.

**Case Study No. 4** (Aired on July 18, B.E. 2546). A good hearted woman was plagued with all kinds of illnesses such as heart problem, high blood-pressure, and kidney problem. Her kidney problem caused her tremendous suffering. Later in life, her legs had to be amputated. The leakage in her heart was so severe that it could not pump enough blood to her major organs and she died as a result.

This woman suffered terribly from her illnesses in this existence because in one past existence when she was a man, he was a merchant and did everything to make as much profit as possible. If anyone borrowed money from him, he would charge a very high interest. When he borrowed money from anyone, he never returned it and caused his creditors to feel vengeful.

**Case Study No. 5** (Aired on March 16, B.E. 2547). A woman suffered from thalassemia (a hereditary form of anemia) and the disease was passed on to her eldest son, which caused him to die at the age of 29.

The mother and son in this case suffered from thalassemia in this existence because in one past existence, the son was a governor and was in charge of a province. But he was an unethical governor. He was corrupt in regards to taxation. The mother in this existence was also his mother in that past existence. She was in favor of her son's corrupt practice. There were however certain officials who did not approve of his wrongdoing. This caused the governor to feel vengeful. They were eventually framed and ordered to be executed. The son in this existence died from thalassemia at a young age because of the ill consequences of corruption and killing in that past existence.

### **Kame-sumiccha-cara (Committing Sexual Misconduct)**

Sexual misconduct includes having an affair outside of marriage and/or having an affair with a married person. Sexual misconduct is committed through the body.

#### **Case Studies in Kame-sumiccha-cara**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on December 16, B.E. 2547). There was a man who thought and behaved more like a woman. He participated in beauty pageants when he was younger. He used to be a masseuse who also dined with the customers. He also consulted a plastic surgeon about a sex-change operation. But after he had the opportunities to practice meditation and listened to stories about sex-change operation, he began to fear its ill consequences. Therefore, he decided to continue practicing meditation and accumulating more and more merit.

This man wanted to be a woman in this existence because he had been promiscuous throughout many of his past existences. He was born good-looking in this existence because he used to wish for good looks every time he made merit in his past existences. Moreover, he knew how to apply make-up in order to enhance his natural good looks.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on October 2, B.E. 2547). A woman had been involved in the sex trade for 25 years. She once lost so much blood and had to have a hysterectomy. Her abdomen had been operated on several times. She also suffered from severe allergy and had difficulty breathing.

She had to be involved in the sex trade for 25 years in this existence because in one past existence, when she was a man, he kept the company of fools and regularly transgressed the Third Precept. He eventually became a pimp in that existence. His promiscuity and his being a pimp coupled with another past existence when she was a prostitute and had an abortion caused her in this existence to suffer blood loss, have a hysterectomy, and undergo several operations. She suffered from severe allergy because in the existence when she was a man and a pimp, he used to force prostitutes to entertain clients by squeezing their throats.

**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on February 1, B.E. 2548). A good-looking woman with good complexion had a masculine personality. When she was little, she used to enjoy playing with little boys because she disliked the games that little girls played. Yet, she would get furious if someone should hint that she was a lesbian. Incidentally, women found her very attractive. She had no idea why her life was this way when she came from a loving family and her parents had brought her up practicing the Dhamma.

This woman had a masculine personality and attracted members of the same sex in this existence because throughout many of her past lifetimes both as a man and a woman, she was promiscuous. However, the number of lifetimes as a promiscuous man outweighs the number of lifetimes as a promiscuous woman. In addition, in one past lifetime as a man, he used to wish that women would fall for him every time he made merit.

**Case Study No. 4** (Aired on June 27, B.E. 2546). A man came from a good and wealthy family. He did not have to work for a living. He had a good personality and enjoyed helping out in merit-making events. He preferred members of the same sex and eventually died of AIDS.

He had sexual relationships with men in this existence because in one past existence he was a very promiscuous man. He subscribed to the philosophy 'love them and leave them'.

**Case Study No. 5** (Aired on October 17, B.E. 2546). A man had a very hard life. He was ordained as a novice monk and later as a Buddhist monk. He remained in the monkhood until he was 28 years old. Later he was married twice.

He was a good role model for his children. He would attend the temple every Holy Day. At home he would lead his children in the morning and evening chanting every day. He did not drink but he smoked. He committed Pana-tipata (killing) during his middle years because he butchered animals for a living. During the latter part of his life, he did try to keep the Five Precepts regularly. Every Holy Day, he would keep the Eight Precepts. Toward the end of his life, he suffered from senility and a condition similar to prostate cancer. He was treated and eventually died when he was 88 years old.

This man had a condition similar to prostate cancer in this existence because of his promiscuity both in this existence and in one past existence coupled with his old age.

## **Musa-vada (Practicing False Speech)**

False speech happens when one has an indecent intention to deceive others by physical and verbal means for one's own gain.

### **Case Studies in Musa-vada**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on May 1, B.E. 2547). A very smart man had a real love for learning. He spent only three years to complete six different grades during his secondary school. He worked as a deputy sheriff for a while and resigned to become a school teacher. However, he drank regularly. As he got older and assumed greater responsibility at work, he drank less and eventually he stopped altogether. He never discussed the temple or the Buddhist monks because he liked neither. Later in his life, he became interested in Buddhism because he had the opportunity to listen to a Dhamma lecture given by a Buddhist monk whom he felt devoted to. He began practicing the Dhamma seriously and was instrumental in helping to complete the construction of the temple near his house. He began to offer food as alms to the Buddhist monks everyday. Later, this man gradually lost his coherence. He was often forgetful and had a difficult time helping himself. He used his toothbrush to comb his hair; he drank salad dressing instead of his soup, etc. He was diagnosed as suffering from senile dementia and his brain function deteriorated faster than normal.

This man suffered from senile dementia in this existence because in one past existence he was a merchant. He lied often about the quality of his merchandise and gave false information about his goods in order to sell them faster.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on November 27, B.E. 2547) A man was born in a rice farmer's family and had had a difficult life since childhood. He used to help out around the temple as a boy and did not go to school. But he was clever and had a good memory so he managed to teach himself how to read Thai and English. As a young man, he used to drink and gamble. After he had children, he was able to quit both because he did not want to be a poor role model for them. Moreover, he attended the temple and practiced meditation with good results. Later on in life, he was afflicted with memory impairment and suffered a stroke that left him paralyzed.

This man suffered memory impairment and a stroke which caused him to be paralyzed in this existence because in one past existence he was addicted to gambling. To afford the habit, he would lie and sell counterfeit goods. Once when he was a dealer in a card game, he lost the game but refused to pay up. Moreover, he and his friends went to beat the winner of the game up until he became paralyzed.

**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on July 16, B.E. 2546). A man regularly gambled in card games and was not trusted by his father. When his father gave him an inheritance, his father put it in his wife's name so that he could not sell it and spend it on his gambling habit. Later, his gambling debt snowballed and he was constantly threatened. He feared for his life and begged his wife to pay his debt for him. His wife was willing to pay his debt provided that he would ordain as a Buddhist monk. He agreed and ordained until he received the Kathina. Only three months after he disrobed, he returned to be with the same gambling crowd in spite of the fact that he once vowed to the Buddha Image during his ordination that he would quit his gambling habit. Later, he had a seizure and terrible diarrhea. His body turned dark green and he died. The cause of his death is unknown.

This man suffered a sudden seizure and terrible diarrhea without any apparent cause in this existence because he went back on his vow to the Buddha Image coupled with his Pana-tipata Kamma both in the present and past existences.

**Case Study No. 4** (Aired on May 31, B.E. 2548). A virtuous woman was in the habit of performing morning and evening chanting and offering food to the Buddhist monks on a regular basis. She was a committee member of the neighborhood temple. She regularly filled the tiffin set with food and offered it to the Buddhist monks at the temple. She also practiced meditation with good results. She was currently suffering from memory impairment.

This woman suffered from memory impairment in this existence because in one past existence, she was a businesswoman and used to practice false speech in her business dealings. Her affliction is also caused by the same practice of false speech in this existence as well as her advanced age.

**Case Study No. 5** (Aired on June 9, B.E. 2548). A woman had the sole responsibility of caring for her eight children after her husband died. Later, she fell ill and lost her ability to speak. She could not use her right arm and leg. She was diagnosed as being afflicted by senile dementia. Her illness worsened and she finally died.

This woman suffered from senile dementia in this existence because in one past existence she was a merchant. She lied to her customers on a regular basis. She could not talk and could not use her right arm and leg in this existence because in another past existence, she was born in a farming community and raised pigs for a living. When it was time to deliver the pigs for the slaughterhouse, she would tie their legs together and bind their snouts.

### **Pisuna-vaca (Practicing Divisive Speech)**

This Karma is performed by individuals whose minds are clouded and gloomy due to the desire to cause others to be devoted to them or to cause division among people.

#### **Case Studies in Pisuna-vaca**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on August 8, B.E. 2546). A woman had tremendous faith in merit-making. She had endeavored to accumulate merit and led others to do the same. She had a personal affliction in that she suffered from itchiness and hives which caused her much discomfort.

This woman suffered from itchiness and hives in this existence because of a verbal misdeed committed during one past existence when she was also a woman. She was in the habit of saying things that were hurtful. If someone said something to her that she did not like or approve of, she would retort in a hurtful way. Her condition was also aggravated by the fact that she often ignored the urge to urinate and defecate in this existence.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on January 26, B.E. 2548) A woman was born into a good family and good environment. Her family and relatives rejoiced in her work for the Buddhist Cause. She was a true friend to all of her relatives. The trouble was she had many freckles on her face.

She had freckles in this existence because in a previous existence when she was a man and a soldier, he used to make cutting and embarrassing remarks to other soldiers when they contributed an idea during meetings.

**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on April 7, B.E. 2547). A woman had had a tough life from little on up and suffered from a leaky heart valve. She was operated on several times. During her hospitalization, she continued to practice meditation and her condition improved miraculously and surprised even the physicians. She regularly attended the temple to practice meditation.

This woman suffered from heart disease in this existence because in one past existence when she was born in a farming community, she worked the oxen and the water buffaloes too hard. She was also in the habit of making biting remarks. She was operated on several times because she killed animals for food in another past existence.

**Case Study No. 4** (Aired on November 6, B.E. 2547). A man was orphaned since childhood. His sister brought him to a Chinese temple and its abbot sent him to school. But for some reasons he could not learn to read or write and had to eventually leave school. Later he started different businesses but met with failure every time. He finally became an employee of a short stay motel of which clients rented rooms for sexual purposes. He was arrested and prosecuted and eventually left the job.

This man could not read or write in this existence because in one past existence he was a very good student but he was in the habit of calling some of his school friends 'stupid' and caused them to suffer much embarrassment.

**Case Study No. 5** (Aired on June 9, B.E. 2546) A man used to be ordained a Buddhist monk. After he disrobed, he went to university and later became an honest lawyer. He was rather poor and took care of his family as well as he could. Later in his life, he suffered from cancer of the mouth.

He died from cancer of the mouth in this existence because in one past existence he was born in a middle class family. He was quick to anger and regularly talked back to his parents. He also used offensive language with them and with others who crossed him for whatever reasons. He would curse at their ancestors as well. The condition was also aggravated by his habit of criticizing senior monks while he was a monk earlier in this existence as well as his drinking and smoking.

## **Pharusa-vaca (Practicing Offensive Language)**

An individual uses offensive language with the intention to alienate and hurt the feelings of another person.

### **Case Studies in Pharusa-vaca**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on May 20, B.E. 2547). A woman had a hot temper and was easily angered. She was sickly and suffered from high blood pressure. She was once given the wrong prescription by the physician assistant and developed a terrible allergic reaction to it. The allergic reaction that began with itchiness turned into boils which made her feel burning pain all over her body.

This woman suffered from high blood pressure and boils in this existence because in one past existence when she became angry she would make hurtful remarks both in front of and behind whomever crossed her. She suffered from burning pain all over her body because in another past existence, she used to prepare her food by dropping live animals into boiling water.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on March 17, B.E. 2548). One woman's husband was fond of drinking. Sometimes she and her children had to butcher a chicken in order to cook savory dishes as accompaniments to the drinks. She had to clean up afterward and it was usually in the small hours of the night before she could finally go to bed. As a result, her health suffered. She was afflicted with an enlarged heart. And her ears ached so much that she could hardly fall sleep.

This woman had poor health and suffered from an enlarged heart in this existence because in both this and one past existence she had killed animals. Her ears ached and she could not fall asleep because in another past existence, she was in the habit of using offensive language and once she boxed her grandchild's ears.

**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on June 30, B.E. 2547). A woman first fell ill with a fever which caused her body to ache. She was admitted to the hospital but the cause of her illness could not be found. A biopsy was also taken. She was finally diagnosed as having an inflamed artery. During that period, her face began to swell and the swelling became worse daily. Her father took her to see an elderly monk about her condition. She began to get better but still had to take her medication. If she did not take her medication, she would feel feverish and fatigued. Later on, she began to notice that something strange was happening to her body. She found out afterward that the medication she had taken when her condition was very serious contained testosterone. Her body began to take on a more masculine form. Her face grew larger. Her chin gradually enlarged. Her eyes sank more deeply into her sockets. Her face took on an appearance of an ape. Her body became more and more muscular and it grew bigger. She had to be admitted to the hospital once again.



Initially, the physician could not find the cause of her physical problems. Later on, another physician found that she suffered from hepatitis. She was prescribed more medication and it gradually made her feel better. But her body began to change yet again. Her face looked more and more man-like which made people think that she was a man dressed as a woman. Later still, she went into hospital to have cosmetic surgery. The surgeon had to cut the flesh from her shoulders in order to make her left cheek fuller in an effort to make her appear more feminine. The surgery took eight hours and made her very weak. After a three-month recuperation, she had another surgery to have her right cheek filled in.

This woman was sickly and her face assumed different appearances in this existence because in one past existence, she was disappointed in love and decided to become a nun. The temple where she lived had many nuns. She had a terrible fight with some of the nuns and during the fight she called one of them 'a monkey face'. She called another one 'a transvestite' and another one 'a swollen face'. In that existence, she was also in the habit of making sarcastic and belittling remarks to these other nuns both to their faces and behind them.

**Case Study No. 4** (Aired on May 14, B.E. 2546). A woman was raised by her parents to have some understanding about the Law of Karma. She believed strongly in the fruits of merit-making. She had accumulated merit throughout her life and encouraged others to do the same. She practiced meditation and attained good results. Yet, she had a life of hardship and had to work very hard. Some time later, she had a fever and a headache. Her left cheek became numb and her mouth skewed to the right. She made a wish for her condition to be healed. Her wish coupled with modern day medication caused her symptoms to disappear within one month. Later, the symptoms returned and this time it was her right cheek which became numb and her mouth skewed to the left.

This woman's mouth skewed to the left or the right in this existence because in one past existence, she was born into a wealthy family and had been quite spoiled by her parents. Whenever her parents or her nanny tried to teach her something, she would talk back. Sometimes she became angry with her nanny and would slap either her face or her mouth. She had to work very hard in this existence because in the same past existence, whenever her parents encouraged her to give alms, she would always say, "I don't believe in alms-giving. When people give alms, it will only make them poorer. People can get rich only if they work hard."

**Case Study No. 5.** (Aired on May 28, B.E. 2548) A woman had a sharp tongue and would curse at everyone in sight. Later, she developed rotting sores all over her body, a condition which spread outward from inside her body. She eventually died.

This woman suffered from rotting sores in this existence because of the current bad Karma of cursing at everyone in sight.

## **Samphap-palapa (Practicing Nonsensical Speech)**

Nonsensical speech or idle talk is completely useless and it robs those concerned of the opportunity to think, say or do something useful.

### **Case Studies in Samphap-palapa**

**Case Study No. 1.** (Aired on December 3, B.E. 2545). A married couple had three children. All three of them had speech impairment. Yet they were not mute or deaf. They could hear but they had difficulty speaking. The cause of their problem could not be found.

These three children had speech impairment and their parents had to bear the burden of having such children in this existence because in one past existence these same parents had these same children. In that existence, the three children could speak normally but they were in the habit of imitating a mute child in the neighborhood. This child, who was also their peer, felt bad whenever he was teased in that manner. The mute child's mother was also unhappy about the incessant teasing and told the three children's mother about it. The mother however sided with her children and did nothing to correct their misbehavior. As the children grew up, once when they were attending the temple, an elderly monk was giving a Dhamma lecture. Since the monk's thoughts travel faster than his words, he tended to stutter. These three men also imitated the way the elderly monk stuttered.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on April 26, B.E. 2546). A man was born in a family that has a firm faith in one particular Buddhist sect. He had attended ceremonies of the sect since childhood. In his heart, however he had no faith in the teachings of the sect. When he grew up, he studied meditation in different countries including Thailand. He had the opportunity to practice meditation and attained good results. After he had found the answers to the questions that he had before, he was able to devote himself to the Lord Buddha's Teachings. He suffered from itchy rashes and had to see a doctor regularly.

The man's skin condition in this existence resulted from his naughtiness in one past existence. In that existence, he was full of self-confidence and enjoyed teasing his playmates, which caused them to feel embarrassed and resentful. For fun, he once put poison ivy all over one friend's body. In addition, he had the habit of ignoring the urge to urinate and defecate in the present existence.

**Case Study No. 3.** (Aired on May 5, B.E. 2547) A woman was devoted to making herself beautiful. She was fun-loving and had a lot of friends. She was kind and loved to contribute to social aid. She did have some

weaknesses in that she committed verbal misdeed and she hated insects such as mosquitoes, cockroaches, etc. Later on, she was diagnosed as having breast cancer and the cancer metastasized to her skin. There were lesions on her skin that oozed with pus and blood. Her skin condition was cured within two months using herbal medicine. She eventually died from cancer.

This woman had breast cancer in this existence because of her sexual misconduct in one past existence. The lesions on her skin were caused by her verbal misdeed in another past existence when she gossiped behind other people's backs and made hurtful remarks to their faces.

**Case Study No. 4.** (Aired on November 21, B.E. 2546) A man suffered from a skin infection that looks like scab. Initially it started in the scalp and the back of his neck but later it spread throughout his body. The skin infection started out as swelling red rashes which itched and were later covered with scab. The scab then fell off when it rubbed against his clothes. When the skin condition was treated, it improved initially only to reappear again. His mother also suffered from the same skin condition but not as severely. The condition kept reoccurring.

Both this man and his mother suffered from the same type of skin infection in this existence because they were also mother and son in one past existence. In that existence, they were a middle-class family and this man had an attitude problem in regards to Buddhist monks. He was in the habit of criticizing and maligning Buddhist monks as well as other people. He was also in the habit of gossiping about other people and maligning them behind their backs. In that existence, his mother approved of his verbal misdeed.

**Case Study No. 5** (Aired on June 16, B.E. 2548) A woman had stuttered since childhood. At times she could not speak and had to smack her own mouth so that the words would come out. Sometimes she had to jump up on the table and jump down before she could speak. At times her siblings would smack her mouth for her. Her condition improved and eventually disappeared during her secondary school years.

This woman stuttered earlier in her life because in one past existence she had a friend who stuttered. She used to tease her friend just for fun but it caused her friend much embarrassment.

## **Abhij-jha (Covetousness)**

It comes from greed and happens when an individual looks at something which belongs to another individual with the desire to covet it.

### **Case Studies in Abhij-jha**

**Case Study No. 1.** (Aired on November 4, B.E. 2546) A man was decent and talented. He had a degree in law and accounting and had worked for an office in the UN. He died from lung cancer in spite of the fact that he neither drank nor smoke.

This man died prematurely from lung cancer in this existence because in one past existence he was born in a farming community and owned a lot of farmland. After his parents died, he wanted to be the sole owner of all the inherited land so he killed his sister by suffocating her with a cloth doused with anesthetic. When her husband and son wanted to revenge themselves on him, he sent someone to kill them as well.

**Case Study No. 2.** (Aired on June 23, B.E. 2547) A woman was patient and honest. She also taught her children to be patient and honest. She regularly practiced meditation before bedtime and made merit as often as she could. She later died in a drowning accident.

This woman died in a drowning accident in this existence because in one past existence she killed a friend because she wanted to take over the friend's possessions.

**Case Study No. 3.** (Aired on July 23, B.E. 2547) A woman started to become ill when she was seventeen years old. The illness came and went. The joints in her fingers ached from one finger to the next. The pain eventually disappeared on its own. Later at the age of 22 she was diagnosed as having Systemic Lupus Erythematosus or SLE. She suffered from acute inflammation of the kidneys and her entire body ached. Her body from the abdomen all the way to her feet was severely swollen. She had received treatments the entire time and eventually her symptom was arrested. However, she had to take medication for the rest of her life.

This woman suffered from SLE in this existence because in one past existence she was a millionaire's daughter. After her father died, she took over all of her father's wealth and refused to share the wealth with her younger siblings. In another past existence, she mixed good seeds with bad ones and sold them as good seeds. She suffered from kidney problems in this existence because in the existence where she took over her father's possessions, she had loaned out money by charging a very high interest.

If any debtor could not repay the loan, she would seize his land or rice fields. If the debtor did not own any land, she would seize his wife and children and turned them into her slaves.

**Case Study No. 4.** (Aired on March 16, B.E. 2548) A man's parents left him a coconut farm. Later the land around his coconut farm was developed and left his land without any way to get to a public road. Without access to a road, the land could not be further developed. He sued one of his neighbors for the right to use his land to get to the public road but he lost the lawsuit which caused him to feel very sad and discouraged.

This man's land was blocked by adjacent land in this existence because in one past existence when he was a millionaire, he would buy a particular piece of land with the intention to close off another piece of land so that its owner would sell it to him cheaply. In addition, he gave his siblings pieces of land which had no access to a road and kept the good pieces of land for himself.

**Case Study No. 5.** (Aired on June 22, B.E. 2548) A woman was a loveable and hard-working person. She was frugal and enjoyed making progress. She went abroad to conduct a real-estate deal only to disappear later without a trace. The police found her body and said that she had been murdered.

This woman was murdered in this existence because in one past existence when she was a man, he and a friend went into business together. Later the desire to take over the entire business drove him to kill his business partner.

### **Bya-pada (Ill-Will)**

It means the intention to cause harm to another living being which includes small insects like mosquitoes, flies, all the way to human beings. When one harbors ill-will against another being, one becomes pre-occupied with how one can cause the object of one's ill-will to be destroyed, to not prosper, to not live much longer, etc. Ill-will not only destroys another being's happiness but also the happiness of the person who harbors it.

#### **Case Studies in Bya-pada**

**Case Study No. 1.** (Aired on May 20, B.E. 2547). A woman was serene, clever, disciplined, kind, and compassionate. Cleanliness was very important to her and she was not very talkative. She had lived with a married man in the same house as his wife and family. The wife of this man's second son often made derogatory remarks about her to other members of the family, which caused her to be more and more alienated. She also hurled abusive remarks at this woman and sometimes even beat her. This woman had never responded in any way to the harsh treatment. Her husband felt helpless against his family's growing animosity against his mistress and could only help by putting ointment on his mistress's bruises. Later on his wife gave him an ultimatum. He had to choose between her and his mistress. He chose his mistress so his wife moved out and took all the money with her.

This woman was left with nothing in this existence because in one past existence she was also the mistress of a married man. In that existence, she tried to talk the man into leaving his wife, which he eventually did. This caused the wife to feel such ill-will against the mistress. In this existence, the wife in that past existence was reborn the wife of the man's second son. It was the reason she abused this woman verbally and physically in this existence.

**Case Study No. 2.** (Aired on June 25, B.E. 2547) A woman killed a man when she was between 16 and 17 years old. This man was her boyfriend. He broke up with her and out of spite brought his new girlfriend to show her. She was so angry that she stole the gun from her brother who was a policeman and shot her former boyfriend. She was put in jail and had suffered tremendous hardship for many years before she was released.

This woman committed murder in this existence because in one past existence when she was born a man, he had left his wife. This caused his wife to feel vengeful and she eventually killed him. Just before he died he swore he would have his revenge. In this existence, the situation was reverse. He was reborn this woman and his wife was reborn a man who

was once her boyfriend. When they met, the bond of ill-will that had been formed between them in that past existence caused her to kill him.

**Case Study No. 3.** (Aired on October 22, B.E. 2545) A man owned a small slaughter-house and operated it with a few helpers. He had killed animals for a living all of his life. He later died.

This man had to earn a living by killing animals and thought of it merely as a good occupation in this existence because in one past existence he felt hatred toward the enemy soldiers who invaded his homeland and killed all of his family members and relatives. He was the only survivor. In addition, in other past existences, whenever he made merit, he did not, for example, make the wish to earn right livelihood in future existences.

**Case Study No. 4.** (Aired on April 28, B.E. 2548) A woman suffered from osteoporosis. She had also undergone several operations. Her thyroid was operated on twice and her abdomen was operated on three times. When the weather was cool, she would suffer from terrible arthritic pain and had to walk with a cane. In addition, she had a tumor about one centimeter in diameter around her meninges but it was not removed.

This woman suffered from thyroid problems in this existence because in one past existence she was not a forgiving person and held on to her grudges. The operations in her abdomen were caused by the misdeed of butchering animals in another past existence. The tumor in her meninges was caused by the misdeed of killing animals by crushing their heads. The severe arthritic pain in her back and in her knees and the osteoporosis were caused by the misdeed of overworking beasts of burden in another past existence.

**Case Study No. 5.** (Aired on December 29, B.E. 2546) A man was shot in the back by an adversary and caused him to be paralyzed from the waist down.

This man was shot in this existence because in one past existence when he was a merchant, he had a business partner. They later had a fight about profit-sharing so they parted way and became fierce competitors. In that existence, this man sent someone to beat his former business partner until he became paralyzed. In this existence, when the two men met the scene was played out except that this time he was the one that was shot and became paralyzed.

## **Miccha-ditthi (Wrong View)**

It means not believing the truth about reality. It means not believing in the fruits of alms-giving, etc.

### **Case Studies in Miccha-ditthi**

**Case Study No. 1.** (Aired on August 10, B.E. 2547) A woman had a very hard childhood. Many times she had to borrow money from her neighbors or from her father's friends in order to pay for the household expenses. Her siblings helped to earn money for the family by folding paper bags, weaving mats, raising pigs, etc. Their lives improved after they graduated from school.

This woman had a very hard childhood in this existence because in one past existence she was born in a family which started out with nothing. Later hard work and frugality made them successful to a certain extent. Therefore, they did not believe in the Law of Kamma. They did not believe that the consequences of merit-making are wealth and prosperity but believed that only hard work could make one rich. Later in that existence, the family business suffered a setback so she followed a virtuous friend's advice and began to accumulate merit. Her life gradually improved as a result.

**Case Study No. 2.** (Aired on January 9, B.E. 2547) A woman used to perform as a medium for earth sprites because she was once advised by a fortune teller that if she allowed herself to be used as a medium, her illness would disappear. She grudgingly allowed herself to be a medium but only for the benefit of her relatives and certain individuals. When her mother became paralyzed she agreed to be a medium so that a particular earth sprite could communicate with anyone that came for help. The result was that her mother could walk again but she was no longer normal. The paralysis recurred several times and she eventually died. After both her parents had died, she stopped performing as a medium but made merit and practiced meditation instead.

She had to perform as a medium in this existence because she subscribed to a similar belief in one past existence. Later in that existence, she stopped and took the Triple Gem as her refuge. History does have a tendency to repeat itself.

**Case Study No. 3.** (Aired on July 19, B.E. 2547) A man was born in New York City. When he was younger, he was a soldier in the Vietnam War and it was during this period that he had the opportunity to study Buddhism. After he returned to the United States, an unknown woman called him up and told him about certain details of his life and tried to talk him into meeting her. He finally went to see this woman and encountered strange and frightening phenomena while he was at her house. She later grabbed his arm with such a force that he was scared witless and ran out of her house. He went to hide in another



woman's house. While there he received a phone call telling him that God would protect him. That was when he decided to become a pastor.

As a pastor, he felt very disillusioned by the actions of one particular deacon so he began to study Buddhism again. His faith in the Lord Buddha's Teachings was such that he began to teach them in church to the young people. But his practice was objected by the deacons of the church.

This man had to encounter strange circumstances which eventually led him to become a pastor and later a believer in Buddhism; he was also born outside of Thailand with non-Buddhist parents in this existence because in one past existence he ordained as a Buddhist monk but later disrobed to have a family. As a result, some of the temper-goers made insulting remarks to him and caused him to feel embarrassed and hurt. He subsequently made a vow that he would never return to worship at the temple again. Later in that existence, some friends took him to attend worship at another religious belief based on theism. Having studied the teachings however, he realized that they did not correspond with the reality of existence. Later still, a virtuous friend led him back to Buddhism. He eventually decided to ordain once again during the last part of his life and remained ordained for the rest of his life in that existence.

**Case Study No. 4.** (Aired on September 2, B.E. 2546) A man had a very difficult life and had had to work hard since his childhood. After he completed the fourth grade, he had to leave school. Later he came to Bangkok to work for his older brother. He was able to save money and accumulate enough knowledge and experience to start a plant. Currently, he still owned and operated the plant.

This man had had to work hard since his childhood in this existence because in one past existence he was a very successful businessman. He had Wrong View and did not believe in the beneficial consequences of alms-giving. He did not believe that the merit earned from practicing generosity could result in material wealth for the merit-maker. He believed that people became wealthy as a result of their diligence and ability. Later he met a virtuous friend who told him about the truth of life according to the Lord Buddha's Teachings. He eventually became a devotee and made as much merit as he could by giving to the Buddhist Cause.

**Case Study No. 5.** (Aired on March 26, B.E. 2547) A woman had a religious belief which was different from Buddhism but she was not a practicing member. She preferred to join the activities of another religious belief which emphasized love and happiness among human and other sentient beings. Later still, she took up meditation practice which led her to believe in the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

This woman was born outside of Buddhism in this existence because in one past existence she started life being a Buddhist but later changed to another religion. The merit that she had accumulated by contributing to the Buddhist's Cause in that existence eventually led her back to Buddhism in this existence.

### 7.2.2 The Ten Wholesome Course of Action.

It means the path of good or wholesome deeds which are deeds which lead one to the States of Happiness. There are ten categories of good or wholesome deeds as follows:

1. **Pana-tipata Vera-mani:** To abstain from killing.
2. **Adinna-dana Vera-mani:** To abstain from stealing.
3. **Kame-sumiccha-cara Vera-mani:** To abstain from sexual misconduct.

The above three categories are physical Kamma or deeds that are carried out through the body.

4. **Musa-vada Vera-mani:** To abstain from false speech.
5. **Pisu-naya va-caya Vera-mani:** To abstain from divisive speech.
6. **Pharu-saya va-caya Vera-mani:** To abstain from offensive language.
7. **Samphap-palapa Vera-mani:** To abstain from nonsensical speech.

The above four categories are verbal Kamma or deeds that are carried out through the words.

8. **A-na-bhij-jha:** Non-covetousness.
9. **A-bya-pada:** No ill will.
10. **Samma-ditthi:** Having Right View.

The above three categories are mental Kamma or deeds that are carried out through the thought.

Since the case studies presented in the Inner Dreams Kindergarten are not grouped according to each category of the Ten Wholesome Course of Action, here we will present the cases by grouping them together under a particular heading. For example, 'to abstain from false speech', 'to abstain from divisive speech', 'to abstain from offensive speech', and 'to abstain from nonsensical speech', these four categories come under the heading of 'endearing speech'. Case studies in the Ten Wholesome Course of Action will be presented as follows:

**Pana-tipata Vera-mani** (To Abstain from Killing)

**It means not taking another being's life. It means laying down all kinds of weapon. It means feeling ashamed of killing. It means feeling loving-kindness for one's fellow beings.**

**Case Studies in Pana-tipata Vera-mani** (To abstain from killing)

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on February 9, B.E. 2547) Both the husband and wife lived to be 94 years old.

This couple lived a long life in this existence because in one past existence they were also husband and wife. Although they were born in a farming community, they vowed that they would not butcher any animals on Holy Days. They kept this vow for the rest of their lives. In the same existence, they once saved the life of an old water buffalo which was about to be slaughtered by their neighbor.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on June 25, B.E. 2547) A woman enjoyed good health all of her life. She had good, strong teeth and did not require denture. She was even-tempered. She was never angry at anyone. She had a very good memory and lived to be 105 years old.

This woman was healthy and lived long in this existence because in one past existence, she was a medicine woman. She was kind and generous and loved to help people. At times she did not charge anything for her service or for the medicine. She also helped her relatives out in times of need.

**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on November 9, B.E. 2547) A woman was clever and had good interpersonal skills. She was even-tempered and was rarely annoyed. She was healthy and lived to be 101 years old.

This woman was healthy and lived long in this existence because in one past existence she often gave medicine to those who needed it and she often released live animals that were about to be butchered.

**Adinna-dana Vera-mani** (To Abstain from Stealing)

**A-na-bhij-jha** (Non-Covetousness)

**Adinna-dana Vera-mani** means to abstain from stealing or taking something without its owner's permission.

**A-na-bhij-jha** means not looking at what belongs to others with the desire to take it or steal it.

These two virtues share the same characteristics in that one does not covertly desire or take what belongs to others.

**Case Studies in Adinna-dana Vera-mani and A-na-bhij-jha**

**Case Study No. 1.** (Aired on June 26, B.E. 2547) A woman had a good life and received practically everything she wanted since childhood. For example, her father gave her a car before she asked him for one. Whenever she wanted to make merit, she always had the money for the purpose although she herself was not wealthy.

This **woman** had a good life and could make as much merit as she wished in this existence because in one past existence, she made merit easily and quickly or if someone told her about a merit-making opportunity, she would make her donation immediately.

**Case Study No. 2.** (Aired on December 29, B.E. 2547) A man was born in a merchant's family. He was friendly, kind, neat and honest. He was a successful businessman and succeeded in whatever business he was engaged in.

This man met with business success in this existence because in one past existence, he made a lot of merit by giving a large amount of alms and aid to the needy. He gave to the Buddhist Cause, he gave to social aid, he gave to other worthwhile causes, he helped his relatives out in times of need, etc. In addition, he was a virtuous friend and encouraged others to make merit.

**Case Study No. 3.** (Aired on May 10, B.E. 2548) A man was born with good looks and good complexion in a well-to-do family. He was a good student and won many awards in different academic contests.

This man enjoyed a life of prosperity in this existence because in one past existence he gave alms, observed the Precepts, and practiced meditation on a regular basis. In addition, he associated with wise people and stayed away from fools. He also helped his relatives out in times of need.

**Case Study No. 4.** (Aired on May 4, B.E. 2548) A woman had a courageous nature and feared no one. She started a small business which grew until she was able to expand into other businesses. She made a lot of money and was awarded the youngest outstanding businesswoman of the year. She later sold insurance and did so well that she was a regular speaker at professional conferences and meetings.

This woman met with great business success in this existence because she donated a great deal of money to the Buddhist Cause in one of her past existences.

**Case Study No. 5.** (Aired on May 28, B.E. 2548) A man was kind and generous and enjoyed helping others in need. A friend of his gave him a piece of land which totaled more than 50 rais (20 acres). Later, he divided the land among his children and gold was found underneath it.

This man was given a parcel of land by his friend in this existence because in one past existence he gave some land to a relative so that the relative could cultivate the land and had the means of supporting himself.

### **Kame-sumiccha-cara Vera-mani** (To Abstain from Sexual Misconduct)

It means to completely abstain from sexual misconduct. It means not having an intimate relationship with a married person, an under-aged person, or a person who is already engaged. It means not having any extramarital affairs.

#### **Case Studies in Kame-sumiccha-cara Vera-mani**

**Case Study No. 1.** (Aired on August 19, B.E. 2546) A husband and wife lived together like two friends and had never consummated their marriage.

This married couple felt toward each other more like friends than husband and wife in this existence because they had been husband and wife throughout many previous existences. Toward the end of each existence, they would both practice chastity. The husband would ordain as a Buddhist monk while the wife observed the Eight Precepts. If they lived in an existence where Buddhism was absent, then the husband would ordain as a Yogi while the wife would ordain as a female Yogi. They had carried out this practice throughout many existences.

**Case Study No. 2.** (Aired on October 19, B.E. 2547) A woman practiced meditation and attained good results although she did not practice it regularly.

This woman easily attained good results in her meditation practice in this existence because in one past existence she was a lay devotee who observed the Eight Precepts. She practiced meditation regularly and was able to attain good results in that existence.

**Case Study No. 3.** (Aired on March 29, B.E. 2547) A girl was born mentally retarded but she practiced endearing speech and had a good complexion. She always asked her parents to take her to make merit at the temple. She practiced chanting and meditation regularly until she attained good results from her meditation practice.

This girl was born mentally retarded in this existence because in one past existence she drank alcohol on a regular basis. The results gained from her meditation practice in this existence came from the fact that in the same past existence she became a nun in order to break her drinking habit. She devoted herself to meditation practice and remained a nun for the rest of her life. She was born in a good and well-to-do family in this existence because in another past existence, she took good care of her aging parents and gave alms regularly. Her good complexion in this existence resulted from the fact that as a nun she meticulously observed the Eight Precepts.

**Case Study No. 4.** (Aired on November 17, B.E. 2547) A woman had devoted her life for the Buddhist Cause by becoming a staff member of the temple. Initially, her family disapproved of her decision but she was not deterred. She continued to work tirelessly for the Buddhist Cause while acting as a virtuous friend to her family. Her family eventually understood her calling and as a result, came regularly to make merit at the temple.

This woman made the decision to serve the Buddhist Faith in spite of her family's disapproval in this existence because in one past existence when she was born a wealthy and handsome man, he was quite promiscuous. Later, he met a virtuous friend and he learnt about the Lord Buddha's Teachings. He felt so devoted that he wanted to ordain as a Buddhist monk but his family did not allow him to do it. Consequently, he told his family that he would ordain for a short period only. Once ordained, however, he became increasingly devoted as he had the opportunity to study more and more of the Lord Buddha's Teachings. His meditation practice proceeded well and he attained good results. Later on, his family rejoiced in his merit. His earlier promiscuity caused him to be reborn a woman while having been a practicing Buddhist monk in that past existence caused her to want to observe the Eight Precepts in this existence.

**Case Study No. 5.** (Aired on February 25, B.E. 2548) A woman entered the nunhood twice. She became a nun the first time because she felt a great loss which resulted from her father's death. She went around different temples to learn different methods of meditation practice. She had observed the Eight Precepts meticulously and was able to gain a deeper understanding of the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

Later she was stricken with a bad thyroid problem and had to leave the nunhood in order to have her condition taken care of. It had taken two years before she was cured. She became a nun once again after she was well. She together with her sister, who was also a nun, set up a meditation facility for people to come to observe the Eight Precepts and practice meditation. The number of people attending the facility had increased with time. During each meditation training course, she would request a Buddhist monk who practiced righteousness to come and train the attendees.

This woman was stricken with a bad thyroid problem in this existence because in one past existence she was not a forgiving person. She also overworked her beasts of burden until they were exhausted, parched, and famished. Her past good Kamma of giving alms and observing the Eight Precepts caused her thyroid problem to be cured later. This woman is partial to the practice of chastity in this existence because in one past existence when she was born a man, he was ordained a Buddhist monk. In addition, in another past existence, she had a difficult marriage and resolved to practice chastity in future existences.

**Musa-vada Vera-mani** (To Abstain from False Speech)

**Pisu-naya vacaya Vera-mani** (To Abstain from Divisive Speech)

**Pharu-saya vacaya Vera-mani** (To Abstain from Offensive Language)

**Samphap-palapa Vera-mani** (To Abstain from Nonsensical Speech)

**Musa-vada Vera-mani** means to completely abstain from false speech. It applies to every uttered word in everyday life as well as when one serves as a witness on a witness stand. One does not lie for the sake of money, etc.

**Pisu-naya vacaya Vera-mani** means to completely abstain from divisive speech. One does not tell what one hears from one party to another party in order to cause the members of the parties to misunderstand each other. On the contrary, one tries to unite people who have been alienated from each other. One employs one's words to foster harmony and unity among people.

**Pharu-saya vacaya Vera-mani** means to completely abstain from offensive language. One does not utter words which are hurtful or degrading. On the contrary, one practices endearing speech.

**Samphap-palapa Vera-mani** means to completely abstain from nonsensical speech. One speaks at the right time and at the right place. One utters facts. One utters logical words, words taken from the right sources, and words which are beneficial at the right time and place.

The above four categories share the same characteristic in that they are verbal deed and will be presented together where relevant case studies are concerned.

**Case Studies in Musa-vada Vera-mani, Pisu-naya vacaya Vera-mani, Pharu-saya vacaya Vera-mani, and Samphap-palapa Vera-mani.**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on January 17, B.E. 2548). A woman enjoyed music and singing and so did her parents. She had entered many contests from the time she was in the first grade all the way until she was in her undergraduate years. She often won first prize and a record company wanted to record her singing for commercial purposes but she did not pursue it.

This woman had a beautiful voice, enjoyed singing and reading poetry, and often served as master of ceremony in this existence because in one past existence, she practiced chanting regularly, she enjoyed conversing about the Dhamma, and she practiced endearing speech. In addition, in other past existences she earned a living as a performer and singer.



**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on February 23, B.E. 2547). A man wanted to be a pilot when he was young and he eventually gained entrance to a flight school but his father would not allow him to attend. As he was growing up, he wanted to become a pastor because he was impressed by the pastor who patiently explained the Bible to the congregation. He also thought that he needed to be highly educated in order to become a pastor. Once again, his wish was frustrated by his father. Eventually, he becomes a talented musician and a singer possessing a beautiful and powerful voice.

This man has a special voice in this existence because in one past existence, he ordained as a Buddhist monk. He enjoyed chanting and giving Dhamma lectures.

**A-bya-pada** (No ill-will)

**A-bya-pada** means having no ill-will and no vengeful thoughts. One wishes others to feel no ill-will against him. One wishes others not to harm him. One wishes others to experience only happiness and safety.

**Case Studies in A-bya-pada**

**Case Study No. 1** (Aired on December 9, B.E. 2545). A young girl suffered from meningitis and the loss of her speech function.

This young girl suffered from meningitis and the loss of her speech function in this existence because in one past existence she was a spoiled brat and misbehaved toward her mother. She loved her father however because he never scolded her. Her father told her to ask her mother for forgiveness and she did. As a result, she had the chance to be cured from this affliction in this existence but she had to continue to accumulate a lot of merit.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on May 24, B.E. 2548). A man had met with near fatal situations several times in his life. When he was a child, he fell with his head first into a pool of mud. He also suffered from a terrible case of boils which covered his entire body. They were filled with pus and eventually burst open. The boils finally disappeared. After he grew up, he ordained as a Buddhist monk and remained in the monkhood until the present.

The reason this man met with near fatal situations and suffered from a terrible case of boils in this existence because he was a soldier in one past existence and had killed many enemy soldiers. He could ordain in this existence because in the same past existence he was a womanizer earlier in his life but when he wanted to ordain a Buddhist monk, he went around asking the women in his life for forgiveness. For that reason, in this existence he could escape the retribution for having been a womanizer in his past existence.

## **Samma-ditthi** (Having Right View)

**Samma-ditthi** means having Right View or right understanding about the following facts: the giving of alms does bear fruit; revering those who are worthy of our reverence does bear fruit; good and evil deeds do bear fruit; the reality of this world exists; the reality of the Hereafter exists; the debt of gratitude owed to one's parents exists; the reality of spontaneous rising exists; the accomplished Buddhist monks who practice righteousness and possess the insightful knowledge of this world and the Hereafter exist.

### **Case Studies in Samma-ditthi**

**Case Study No. 1** (November 20, B.E. 2547). A woman had delicate health and had to support her children all by herself. She had worked hard all her life and had to save for the future. Nonetheless, she never missed an opportunity to make merit and she accumulated merit with a joyful heart. Later she was diagnosed with diabetes, blockage of the heart's artery, blockage of the artery on the right side of the brain. She experienced tremendous pain but she was mindful about accumulating merit and continued to do so until she died.

This woman had a hard life and suffered from different illnesses in this existence because in one past existence, she worked her slaves very hard and did not treat them well but the merit which she had accumulated in this existence allowed her to survive her illnesses for as long as she did. She met kind people that supported her through hard times because in another past existence she had taken good care of her parents when they were ill. In addition, her children made merit on her behalf to the best of their ability.

**Case Study No. 2** (Aired on November 25, B.E. 2545) A man had had a hard life since his childhood but he was blessed with extraordinary intelligence and cleverness. As an adult, he met with much business success and owned a group of companies. He was admired by many.

This man had had a hard life since childhood in this existence because in one past existence he was born in a noble and wealthy family. He was very arrogant. Whenever his poorer friends encouraged him to accumulate merit, he would become very annoyed. He would tell his friend to stop pestering him about merit-making. He was extraordinarily intelligent and clever and met with much business success in this existence because in the same past existence he did finally go with his friends to make merit. As he continued to accumulate more and more merit he felt more and more inspired. In addition, in this existence he had given much to social causes such as funding the building of a school and a hospital.

**Case Study No. 3** (Aired on May 13, B.E. 2547) A man had been a restaurateur for 20 years. He had sold alcohol and cigarettes in his restaurant. Later, he closed the restaurant business and went into the direct sales business with Amway. It took him only a short while to meet with a certain level of success. Although he had not been active in the business for the past 11 years he still received an income from Amway every month.

This man had to work hard most of his life and had no real savings in this existence because in one past existence he did not accumulate much merit. Moreover, he had the habit of not repaying his loans. He had a monthly income without having to do any work in this existence because in another past existence he took care of his parents for the rest of their lives.

**Case Study No. 4** (Aired on July 17, B.E. 2547) A woman had to live with a relative since she was two years old. Later she was adopted by a couple who loved her like a daughter. She later married a man whom she did not love but her husband had never stood in the way of her merit-making.

This woman was cared for by a relative and a loving couple in this existence because in one past existence she took good care of her parents and helped her relatives out in times of need. Her husband had not stood in the way of her merit-making because in the same past existence, he was one of the relatives whom she had helped.

**Case Study No. 5** (Aired on June 17, B.E. 2548) A woman was born in a country where people believed in Buddhism. She was a very good student and received many awards. After finishing her secondary education, she volunteered to give Dhamma lessons on Sundays because she really enjoyed doing it. In addition, she made room in her house for children to practice meditation in.

This woman enjoyed giving Dhamma lessons in this existence because in one past existence she was born a man and ordained as a Buddhist monk. He used to give Dhamma lectures to the lay people. She was born in a Buddhist land because she had accumulated merit by contributing to the Buddhist Cause for many consecutive lifetimes.

The case studies presented here are but a few examples of those presented in the Inner Dreams Kindergarten. Case studies in the Law of Kamma allow us to appreciate the root cause of the vicissitudes of life experienced by each individual on earth. What happens to us in our lives cannot be explained using only the cause and effect of the present lifetime. For example, a person was born poor and had a difficult life in the early part of his life but later meets with business success. Therefore, he concludes that to be wealthy, one has to be hard-working and smart. The fact is he has no idea what causes him to be born in a poor family in the first place and what causes him to experience hardship during the early part of his life. However, once he has the opportunities to study about the Law of Kamma through the different case studies, he comes to realize how the unique combination of wholesome and unwholesome deeds which each individual had performed in past lifetimes causes us all to be uniquely different. These case studies illustrate that **the Law of Kamma exists and the consequences of Kamma exist**. Each individual must receive the consequences of every single one of his actions. Even in their final rebirth, the Lord Buddha and the Arahats could not avoid the consequences of their respective Kamma.

The Law of Kamma operates constantly and is not conditional upon one's belief or disbelief. The danger is when an unbeliever has Wrong View and commits misdeeds, after he dies he will have a rebirth in the States of Unhappiness. Should his past merit save him from a rebirth in the States of Unhappiness, his misdeed will definitely send its ill consequences in his next rebirth in the Human Realm. It is so important that we not only set our life-goal but also determine never to commit any unwholesome deed.

Unfortunately, most people nowadays are only concerned with making a living. They are under the wrong impression that money is the god which can give them everything they want. When they see rich and famous people enjoy a life of luxury, they are driven all the more to imitate the rich and famous.

Such a superficial life-goal is very dangerous because it is based on ignorance. Given such a life-goal, no provisions are being made for life in the hereafter and the first and only time they realize their grave mistake is when they experience what is termed '**Destination-Emotion**' just before they die. By then it is much too late. The following is the answer given to King Milinda by Phra Nagasen during their conversation about the Dhamma.

Merit is like a boat whereas evil is like a stone. If an individual, who has committed wickedness all his life, can keep his consciousness away from his misdeeds by concentrating on wholesome thoughts such as the virtues of the Lord Buddha at the moment of death, he will have a rebirth in the States of Happiness. It is like a boat that can keep the stone afloat. However, if an individual, who commits a misdeed only once, allows his consciousness to dwell on the misdeed just before he dies, he will have a rebirth in the Hell Realm. It is like throwing a stone into the water, however small the stone may be it will most certainly sink to the bottom.

Since the human body is the best physical form for the maximum accumulation of merit, we must hurry to make merit and cultivate Perfections to the best of our ability before we die. Anyone, who committed misdeeds in the past, should forget all about them because what's done is done. He should however do his best to abstain from wickedness and to perform only wholesome deeds. He should keep his mind clear and bright by practicing meditation regularly. We alone can help ourselves and we must do so while we are here. Once we die, only our wholesome or unwholesome deeds can determine our next place of rebirth as taught by the Lord Buddha,

panimhi ce vano nassa hareyya panina visan  
Nappanan visamanevati natthi papan akubbato

If the palm of the hand does not contain any cuts, the person can hold  
poison in his hand because the poison cannot enter the body.

In the same manner, evil cannot taint someone who abstains from it.

This saying of the Lord Buddha confirms that wholesome and unwholesome deeds belong to the individual who performs them. No one can take responsibility for the deeds performed by someone else. Therefore, if anyone wishes to meet with happiness and success now, if anyone wishes to have a rebirth in the States of Happiness after he dies, then he should follow the Lord Buddha's Teachings. He should stay clear away from all unwholesomeness. He should practice meditation regularly to keep his mind bright and clear. He should also keep the Precepts. When death comes, his wish to have a rebirth in the States of Happiness will be fulfilled and his wholesome deeds will follow him and bless him with happiness and success for a long, long time to come.

## Exercises

After the student finishes studying Chapter 7, please complete the test at the end of the chapter and exercises 7.1, 7.2 provided in the workbook before proceeding to Chapter 8.

## **CHAPTER 8**

# **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS ABOUT THE LAW OF KAMMA AND ITS RELEVANCE TO OTHER LAWS**

### **Topics Covered in Chapter 8**

**8.1 The Law of Kamma and Right View**

**8.2 The Law of Kamma and the Round of Rebirth**

**8.3 The Scriptures which Deal with the Law of Kamma and the Consequences of Kamma**

**8.4 Summary of the Main Points and Practices**

## Concepts

1. It is very necessary that every human being has right understanding about the Law of Kamma. Otherwise he can too easily make mistakes and before he knows it, he is making the same mistakes over and over again without ever being aware of the consequences of his action. Therefore, it is imperative that one develops Right View because our view serves to guide our ways. Right View guides us to live a life of prosperity whereas Wrong View guides us to a life of degradation.
2. Whenever the Lord Buddha taught about the Law of Kamma, He would also mention the round of rebirth for the two are closely related. That is, the Law of Kamma forces living beings to continue undergoing the round of rebirth as a consequence of their overall Kamma. Therefore, death is not the end.
3. Holy individuals are those who have lived their lives correctly. They have attained Emancipation and are pure in body, words, and thoughts. During their final rebirth, however, they are still under the dictate of their overall Kamma. The great Maha-Moggalana was beaten to death as a retribution for having committed matricide and patricide in a far distant past existence. It must be borne in mind that only when defilements are completely extinguished that one can attain Nibbana, hence, being emancipated from the Law of Kamma and the round of rebirth.

## Objectives

1. To enable the student to clearly understand how Right View can have a beneficial and positive influence on our action.
2. To enable the student to understand how the round of rebirth is caused by our overall Kamma or overall good and bad deeds.
3. To enable the student to learn the Path which leads us to be emancipated from the Law of Kamma.



# **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS ABOUT THE LAW OF KAMMA AND ITS RELEVANCE TO OTHER LAWS**

## **8.1 The Law of Kamma and Right View**

The Lord Buddha, the light of the world and the universe, happens for the purpose of assuaging suffering and promoting happiness for all living beings. He is the world's and the universe's true refuge. Since the first day He resolved to become enlightened as a Buddha one day in the distant future, he had had Right View and had continued to accumulate merit and cultivate Perfections throughout His countless lifetimes. He did everything good and decent for the sake of Buddhahood. In His final lifetime, He became enlightened as the Lord Buddha and discovered the Four Noble Truths. He knew that living beings continued to suffer because they lacked Right View. In ignorance, they have continued to accumulate misdeeds. The Lord Buddha emphasized the importance of having Right View because it could guide one to accumulate only good deeds. The Tenfold Right View is as follows:

- 1. Practice Generosity:** To survive, we all need the four necessities which include shelter, food, clothes, and medicine. Since all of us are still trapped in the round of rebirth and must continue to suffer rebirth, aging, illnesses, and death, it is necessary that we help each other by giving to one another generously. Moreover, we must not exploit each other and we must not be inconsiderate. We must try to remove miserliness from us by practicing generosity. We must believe that alms-giving does bear fruit. Unfortunately, what we are seeing today is selfishness, exploitation, and other signs of greed.
  
- 2. Help Each Other Out in Times of Need:** We must learn to live together despite our diversity because none of us can exist alone. When everyone in the community can have more or less an equal standard of living, there will be less problems overall. When certain members of the community encounter financial hardship and cannot adequately support themselves, it is up to the better-to-do members to help these other members out as best as they can so that they can continue to survive and have the opportunity to better themselves later on. We must believe that aid-giving does bear fruit. It means that giving to social aid is one way to accumulate good deeds because we are helping our fellow beings out in times of need. Unfortunately, what does happen in the world today is how these less fortunate members of the community are sometimes taken advantaged of by the better-to-do members.

- 3. Admire and Honor Virtuous Individuals:** Individuals worthy of our respect and gratitude both directly and indirectly include our ancestors, our parents, our teachers, our elders, our superior, and the Buddhist monks who practice righteousness. We express our gratitude to them by admiring them and respecting them, by not finding faults with them, not feeling jealous of them, or not trying to act superior to them. Admiring and honoring virtuous individuals is a decent practice which should be passed on to posterity. We must believe that revering individuals who are worthy of our reverence does bear fruit. The practice fosters harmony and unity and encourages us to do good deeds. Unfortunately, most people nowadays feel no need to care for their aging parents. They want to replace their boss by taking over his job. They do not respect their teachers, etc. Such indecent practices spawn fierce rivalry, disunity, and disharmony.
- 4. Good and Bad Kamma Do Bear Fruit:** This is in accordance with the saying ‘we reap what we sow’ in that we receive the good consequences of our good deeds and we receive the ill consequences of our bad deeds. Therefore, it is crucially important that we know the criteria of good and bad deeds so that we can choose to perform only good deeds. Everything we decide to do good or otherwise remains within us. It is like hammering a nail into a plank of wood and removing the nail afterward, the plank still bears the scar from the nail. Good deeds cannot wipe away bad deeds. However, good deeds can dilute or slow down the ill consequences of bad deeds in the way that water can be added to salt. The more water is added, the less salty the water will be. But if more salt is added, then the water will become more salty.
- 5. The Reality of This World Exists:** This world encompasses conditioned things, body, and mind in the forms of living beings which include human beings, celestial beings, hell beings and their respective abodes. The Law of Kamma dictates that each being lives with the consequences of his past Kamma and lives to perform new Kamma. That is, everything in our lives and every aspect about our lives are determined by our overall Kamma. There are no such things as coincidences. As a human being, each one of us meets with life’s vicissitudes in a unique way as a result of our unique overall Kamma. No two people face the exact same pattern of vicissitudes. Not only does the reality of this world exist but this world is a world of opportunities for human beings. We can use our body to perform good deeds and accumulate as much merit as we wish. This is in contrast to celestial beings and animals that cannot perform good deeds to any real extent. The Human Realm is conducive to the accumulation of good deeds because we are surrounded by virtuous friends such as Buddhist monks, novice monks, parents, teachers, etc. We have only a finite amount of time in this world. We may or may not reach the average lifespan and death can come at any moment. Certain misdeeds in our past existences can very easily cut short our life. It behooves us then to hurry and accumulate as many good deeds as possible while we can and to abandon all misdeeds. We must do our best with whatever time we have left. Remember that this world is a world of opportunities and we must use everything it provides to perform only wholesome deeds.

**6. The Reality of the Hereafter Exists:** Death is definitely not the end. As long as the consciousness is still dominated by defilements, only the body deteriorates and dies but the consciousness continues to undergo rebirth as dictated by its overall Kamma. The Lord Buddha said, “All beings possess their own Kamma. They are the heir of their Kamma. Their rebirth and their race are determined by their Kamma. Their Kamma is their refuge. Their Kamma determines their crudeness and their refinement.” The Lord Buddha’s saying makes us realize that wherever a human being or an animal is born, each being is receiving the consequences of the good and bad Kamma accumulated in his past existences. That makes each one of us the heir of our Kamma. After death, each being continues to live in the hereafter by being reborn as a human being, an animal, etc., depending on each being’s overall Kamma. For example, if during one’s existence as a human being, one is a womanizer and a liar, after one dies one will be reborn as a monkey. Based on the Lord Buddha’s Teachings, the theory of evolution is inconsistent with the truth because what causes a human rebirth and what causes an animal rebirth are completely different. Species does not evolve and the overall similarity among species arises from similar overall Kamma of members of the respective species.

The hereafter or rebirth takes place right after death. Since living beings are still trapped in the round of rebirth, there subsequently arise different realms of existence to accommodate them. Take for example our earth where we can see human beings and a great variety of animals inhabiting the same realm of existence. Human beings live like human beings and animals live like animals. For example, fish must live in the water. They will die if they try to live on land. In the same token, human beings who try to live like fish will only die. The hereafter of each living being is unknown. One does not know what type of being one will be next reborn as. One may have a rebirth in a different universe altogether. The only thing which is certain is the fact that everyone must be reborn and continue to live in the hereafter because our inherent defilements are still with us. Therefore, it behooves us to learn about the hereafter and how it is determined by our overall Kamma. There are four ways to prepare for life in the hereafter.

- 1) We must believe in Kamma and the Law of Kamma.
- 2) We must practice generosity by giving alms and do it to our best ability. We must convert our money and other material wealth, which are crude wealth into merit which is refined wealth. The reason is life in the hereafter is nourished by our accumulated merit or condemned by our accumulated demerit.
- 3) We must observe the Five Precepts meticulously. The Five Precepts are what make us truly human.
- 4) We must develop our insight through the practice of meditation. Meditation is instrumental in the cultivation of penetrating insight. This penetrating insight allows us to witness the truth for what it is. The brighter our penetrating insight, the further we can witness the truth. This type of insight is called ‘Bhavana-maya-panna’ or insight resulting from mental development.

Life in the hereafter is unavoidable since we are still dominated by defilements. How we live in the hereafter is dictated by our overall Kamma and the Law of Kamma. If we have made mistakes throughout our past, now is the time to stop making them. We must go forward and leave all the mistakes behind us. We must follow the Lord Buddha's instructions and live each day to the best of our ability by accumulating only good deeds.

**7. We Are Indebted to Our Mother:** Mother is considered the Arahat of the home. She carries us in her womb. She nurtures and takes care of us since our birth. She gives of herself generously. At the very least, we owe our mother in the three following ways:

- 1) She makes it possible for us to be conceived.
- 2) She is our physical prototype.
- 3) She is our psychological prototype.

It is becoming more and more evident these days how teenagers tend to overlook their mothers' important role. They pay more attention to their friends than to their mothers. They tend to get annoyed with their mothers and accuse them of being nagging when they are only trying to teach them something. The ready availability of alcohol and drugs causes some individuals to commit matricide because their mothers refuse to give them any money to indulge in their habit. Matricide is a very grave misdeed and will cause the perpetrator to have a rebirth in the hell realm of Aveci immediately after he dies. The best way to repay our mother is not by becoming a successful professional or by giving her money but by encouraging her to give alms, observe the Five Precepts, and practice meditation.

**8. We Are Indebted to Our Father:** An example of someone who could eventually realize his father's important role is King Ajatasattu. Having been misled by a wicked person, he had killed his father King Bimbisara. A story was told to demonstrate the deep love that King Bimbisara had for his son. When his son was young and suffered from a very painful boil, King Bimbisara used his mouth to suck the pus from the boil because he could not bear to see his son cry so piteously. After the patricide, King Ajatasattu understood the love his father had for him because he became a father for the first time himself. His guilt made him unable to eat or sleep. Our father made it possible for us to be conceived. He serves as our physical and psychological prototype in the same way as our mother. Here again, the best way to repay our father is not by becoming a successful professional or by giving him money but by encouraging him to give alms, observe the Five Precepts, and practice meditation.

**9. The Reality of Spontaneous Rising Exists:** Spontaneous rising means have a rebirth in an adult form, which is completely different from human beings and animals. A rebirth in the Celestial Realm, the Form Brahma Realm, and the Non-Form Brahma Realm takes the form of spontaneous rising. Spontaneous rising also occurs in

the Peta Realm, the Asurakaya Realm, and the Hell Realm. There are at least two reasons why we should study about spontaneous arising as follows:

**1) Knowledge about Spontaneous Rising Encourages Us to Develop Hiri and Ottappa**

Hiri means being ashamed of evil while Ottappa means being fearful of the ill consequences of evil deeds. The lack of these two virtues is what causes many more living beings to be reborn in the States of Unhappiness. The Lord Buddha compared the number of beings being reborn in the States of Happiness as the number of an ox's horns whereas the number of those reborn in the States of Unhappiness as the number of the ox's body hair. The chance of having a rebirth as a human being is as scarce as a blind turtle which comes up for air every 100 years and happens to get its neck caught inside a noose hanging about at the surface of the great ocean. The number of living beings that are reborn as a human being is like the amount of dust in the fingernail when compared to all the dust on earth. All the dust on earth can be compared to the number of human beings that are reborn in the States of Unhappiness after they die simply because they have committed so many misdeeds during their human existence on earth.

Hiri and Ottappa work to keep us from making mistakes in two ways:

- 1.1) When temptation comes from outside of us in the form of diversity especially in the area of differences in religious belief, it can lead to misunderstanding, arguments, fights, and all the way to violent eruptions which can lead to killing. When we are caught in the situation, we must exercise patience and resist any anger which may arise because once a fight breaks out, enmity will not only occur between the involved parties but will also follow both parties and bind them in a bond of enmity for endless lifetimes to come.
- 1.2) When temptation comes from outside of us in the form of different Causes of Ruin<sup>1</sup>, we must avoid them at all cost by exercising our Hiri and Ottappa.

**2) Knowledge about Spontaneous Rising Encourages Us to Accumulate Merit**

Now that we know how life continues in the hereafter in two ways which are the States of Happiness and the States of Unhappiness, we should feel encouraged to perform only wholesome deeds so that we can spend our hereafter in the States of Happiness. After we have continued to perform wholesome deeds countless lifetimes after countless lifetimes, we can eventually achieve Emancipation and attain Nibbana.

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<sup>1</sup> There are six Causes of Ruin: 1) Substance addiction; 2) A penchant for the nightlife; 3) Game and sport junkies; 4) Gambling addiction; 5) Keeping the company of wicked individuals; 6) Laziness

The fact that the naked human eye cannot detect spontaneous arising which has a more refined physical form can cause some of us to disbelieve about life in the hereafter. But for those of us fortunate enough to learn about spontaneous arising, we should take care and live our lives in ways that will lead us to spend the hereafter in the States of Happiness. We must endeavor to perform only wholesome deeds and not to give in to any temptation to exploit or harm others for the sake of our own gain. We should be willing to lay down our lives in order to avoid committing any misdeed. This way we can remind ourselves and advise others not to commit even the slightest misdeed but to perform even the slightest good deed.

**10. The Accomplished Buddhist Monks Who Practice Righteousness and Possess the Insightful Knowledge of This World and the Hereafter Exist:** It means that the Path which leads to enlightenment exists. It means that Arahats exist. It means that as long as there are holy individuals in the world who practice according to the Noble Eightfold Path, there will continue to be Arahats. Individuals who have the insightful knowledge of this world and the hereafter can be divided into two categories as follows:

**Category 1: The Lord Buddha**

**Category 2: The Arahats**

The Lord Buddha mentioned this particular part of the Tenfold Right View because He wanted to point out that there were indeed individuals that had insightful knowledge of the hereafter. The hereafter is not a figment of imagination or a result of intellectual debate. Such insightful knowledge can only be gained by Buddhist monks who practice righteousness in accordance with the Lord Buddha's Teachings. The knowledge can be gained by any individual who lays down his life to practice according to the Noble Eightfold Path. Although the Lord Buddha and the Arahats are no longer with us, there are still holy individuals that have attained a certain level of this insightful knowledge. Therefore, it is up to us to search for such worthy individuals, to learn from them, to follow their teaching so that we too can gain a certain level of this insightful knowledge.

Having the Tenfold Right View can help us to set three life-goals which include abandoning evil, performing good deeds, and keeping our mind bright and clear. These goals keep us on the right course. Therefore, we must keep these goals in mind all the time. There were several examples of individuals during the time of our Lord Buddha who possessed enough overall merit to attain Arahatship. However, they missed the precious opportunity because they had associated with fools in their youth.

## 8.2 The Law of Kamma and the Round of Rebirth

As long as one still possesses defilements, one will continue to perform both good and bad deeds and receive their consequences. An individual's Kamma and its consequences follow him like a shadow and it is only a matter of time before the consequences show up. Our deeds good or bad are what cause the round of rebirth to be perpetuated. Every single one of us has been reborn for countless times and has been everything imaginable from a king to a shrimp, a snail, a crab, a fish. As long as defilements are still inherent within us, we will continue to perform Kamma and receive its consequences by being reborn in different life circumstances such as being reborn in a family of nobility, being reborn in a poor family, being reborn in the Celestial Realm, being reborn in the Hell Realm, etc. Our rebirth is determined by our overall Kamma and its consequences. The uniqueness of each individual's overall Kamma causes each individual to be uniquely different in every possible way. Our particular circumstances in life are not dictated by any powerful being. An individual's health problem, financial problem or the vicissitudes of life do not happen for the purpose of testing his faith. It has been long debated as to the source of differences and diversity among human beings. Answers are quick to surface and different solutions have been tried to solve the problem but to no avail because the solutions do not address the root cause of the problem. A wealthy person in this lifetime will not necessarily be wealthy in future lifetimes especially if he is reckless and careless in the way he lives his life in this lifetime. In the same manner, a poor person in this lifetime will not necessarily be poor in future lifetimes especially if he is careful in the way he lives his life by accumulating good deeds.

What does it mean by not being reckless or careless? The root cause of recklessness or carelessness is our defilements which include greed, anger, and ignorance (Avijja). Avijja or ignorance destroys our ability, effectiveness, and quality. Greed causes us to be stingy. Stinginess in turn causes poverty or the depletion of material wealth. Anger causes ill-will. Ill-will causes the depletion of corporeal wealth because ill-will undermines and destroys one's good looks and complexion. Ignorance causes us to be misguided and to have Wrong View. Wrong View destroys one's mindfulness and discernment. These are the root causes and effects. After our Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment, He discovered how defilements influence all living beings to live life recklessly, to live life without the benefit of mindfulness and discernment. Since the Lord Buddha saw that we are under the influence of greed, anger, and ignorance, He taught us to counteract greed with generosity. Alms-giving is the true source of material wealth. He taught us to counteract anger with loving-kindness and the Precepts. Keeping the Precepts is the true source of corporeal wealth. He taught us to counteract ignorance with meditation practice. Meditation attainments are the true source of one's attributes. Most importantly, meditation attainments lead us to enlightenment. The Dhamma which consists of 84,000 Scriptures can be summarized as alms-giving, Precepts, meditation practice, and insight. These practices form the components of the Noble Eightfold Path or the Middle Path which includes Precepts, concentration, and insight. Yet, the entire body of the Scriptures can be summarized into one thing and that is: not being reckless. The Lord Buddha compared this summary to the footprints of all animals which can be contained within the footprint of an elephant. When an individual is born replete with material wealth, corporeal wealth, and attributes, it will make it much easier for him to continue accumulating merit and cultivating Perfections in this lifetime. When a person lacks material wealth, he may have to spend his entire life working and still may not be able to accumulate any real wealth. When a person

is born physically handicapped or mentally retarded, it will be difficult for him to accumulate good deeds because he needs practically all of his efforts just to care for himself. Some people know suffering and are resigned to it. Some people know creature comforts but can penetrate suffering as in the case of our Lord Buddha. He was surrounded by every material thing desirable, yet he could discern its impermanence and potential harm. Some people may have heard about alms-giving, keeping the Precepts, and practicing meditation, yet they cannot be bothered to practice any of these virtues. They see the path right in front of them but choose to walk another path which they imagine to be better. We need to have Yoniso-mana-sikara or analytical reflection so that we can live our lives without recklessness. Living just one day with recklessness is better than living recklessly for 100 years.

### Summary of the Lord Buddha’s Teachings

Tri-pitaka	The Threefold Training	The Eightfold Path	
Vinaya-pitaka 21,000 Scriptures	Precepts	Right Speech Right Action Right Livelihood	The entire body of the Scriptures can be summarized as <b>‘Not Being Reckless’</b>
Suttanta-pitaka 21,000 Scriptures	Mental Discipline	Right Effort Right Mindfulness Right Concentration	
Abhi-dhamma-pitaka 42,000 Scriptures	Insight	Right View Right Thought	

The round of rebirth is perpetuated by the Law of Kamma which works all the time and never rests. It sends the consequences of our past overall Kamma as soon as it can and they manifest themselves as life’s vicissitudes. Our good Kamma gives happy consequences while our bad Kamma gives unhappy consequences. In the context of the round of rebirth, there are four different types of human beings.

- 1. Individuals Who Come from Darkness and Return to Darkness:** An individual is reborn in abject circumstances and commits misdeeds through his body, his words, and his thoughts. After he dies, he will be reborn in the States of Unhappiness.
- 2. Individuals Who Come from Darkness and Return to Light:** An individual is reborn in abject circumstances and endeavors to perform honest deeds through his body, his words, and his thoughts. After he dies, he will be reborn in the States of Happiness.



- 3. Individuals Who Come from Light and Return to Darkness:** An individual is born in good circumstances but commits misdeeds through his body, his words, and his thoughts. After he dies, he will be reborn in the States of Unhappiness.
- 4. Individuals Who Come from Light and Return to Light:** An individual is born in good circumstances and performs honest deeds through his body, his words, and his thoughts. After he dies, he will be reborn in the States of Happiness.

Of all living beings within the round of rebirth, human beings have the best opportunity to rid themselves of all defilements and achieve Emancipation. The process of Emancipation requires the scrupulous training of the body, the words, and the thoughts according to The Threefold Training and The Eightfold Path. The more scrupulous the training, the shorter the round of rebirth will be.

Individuals who can achieve Emancipation through the Four Noble Truths and are on their way to attain Nibbana include Sota-pannas (Stream-Enterers), Sakata-gamis (Once-Returners), and Ana-gamis (Non-Returners). These holy individuals have a small amount of defilements left in their nature. If they can completely remove their residual defilements from their nature in the present lifetime, as soon as they die they will attain Nibbana and will no longer undergo the round of rebirth as in the cases of the holiest individuals that include the Lord Buddhas, the Silent Buddhas, and the Arahats. As long as human beings cannot remove all the defilements from their nature, they will continue to undergo the round of rebirth just like the rest of the living beings. Living beings continue to encounter suffering as a result of their inherent defilements. All living beings risk the danger of committing misdeeds and receiving the ill consequences of their misdeeds. All living beings share the suffering of birth, aging, illnesses, and death. We are all compatriots under the dictate of our own defilements and the Law of Kamma. Therefore, we should not view each other as enemy, since our common enemy is the force which compels all living beings to undergo the endless round of rebirth.

“Our nature is led by our mind. The mind is chief. Everything is achieved by the mind. If a person’s mind is evil, whatever he says or does will eventually cause him to suffer.” Everything depends on the mind. Someone once asked the Lord Buddha, “Of all the physical, verbal, and mental deeds, which type of deeds can wreak the most havoc?” The Lord Buddha answered that mental deeds can wreak the most havoc. The Lord Buddha also gave us an analogy to demonstrate the point. Suppose there was a village inhabited by 100 or 1,000 people and a man decided to kill all the inhabitants. He could succeed in killing perhaps ten to fifty people before he became physically fatigued and overcome by his enemy. This analogy shows clearly how one’s mind is capable of thinking about doing something at a scale far greater than what can actually be carried out physically and verbally. If human beings can control themselves by practicing morality, there will not be any need for law and order, which serve to solve problems at the end result rather than at the root cause. Every human problem can be ended when each human being practices morality which is the beginning of all decency. It is crucially important that every human being learns to control his mind by returning it to its original location. A decent mind leads to decent words and action. Decency comes from keeping the Precepts so meticulously that not even a single thought of committing a misdeed is present. When the body is at peace, so will the mind be. Once both the body and the mind are at peace,

it gives rise to mental discipline. The more mental discipline one possesses, the brighter one's insight will be. The more insight one gains, the better one can penetrate the reality of life, the reality of the worlds, and the reality of the Law of Kamma.

### **8.3 The Scriptures which Deal with the Law of Kamma and the Consequences of Kamma**

The Law of Kamma states that “Whatever Kamma an individual performs, whether it is good or bad, he will receive the consequences of that Kamma.” Although human beings have undergone endless rebirths within the round of rebirth, our lack of insight makes it impossible for us to penetrate the workings of the Law of Kamma. We have all been blinded by Avijja or ignorance. Amnesia is our lot because with every rebirth, we are made to forget the good and bad deeds of our past existences. In other words, our past existences are completely concealed from us.

People of every age wonder whether good deeds result in good consequences and bad deeds result in ill consequences. Confusion rules since there have been examples of wicked people doing well and good people doing poorly. It is only when we study about the Law of Kamma that we can appreciate the true complexity of the Law of Kamma, which cannot be understood using mere human intellect. Only the bright insight of the Lord Buddha can penetrate the Law of Kamma and how it works.

As Buddhists, we must study about **the principles of the Law of Kamma**. Non-Buddhists should also study about the Law of Kamma, since the Lord Buddha's Teachings are universal knowledge and apply to everyone. Although we were not born during the time of the Lord Buddha, we have been given the key to His Teachings in the Suttas contained in the Tripitaka. There are many Suttas which deal with the Law of Kamma but only a few important ones will be cited here.

#### **8.3.1 The Law of Kamma as Described in the Cula-kamma-vibhanga Sutta**

Once, our Lord Buddha was staying at the great Jetavana Temple which had been built by the millionaire Anatha-pindika in the city of Savatthi. A man by the name of Subha-manob Todey-yaputra came to see the Lord Buddha. Having properly greeted the Lord Buddha, he sat down at one side before asking his question. “Most Exalted One, what causes human beings to be born crude and refined; to have a short life and a long life; to be sickly and healthy; to have a poor complexion and a good complexion; to possess high authority and low authority; to have little and a lot of material wealth; to be low-born and high-born; to have low and high intellect. Most Exalted One, what causes these differences among human beings?”

The Lord Buddha answered, “Behold, young man, all beings possess their own particular Kamma; they are the heirs of their Kamma; their rebirths are dictated by their Kamma; their race is determined by their Kamma; they have their Kamma as their refuge. Kamma causes beings to be crude or refined.”

Subha-manob asked, “I cannot understand the full context of what the Most Exalted One just said. May I ask that the Exalted One elaborate on this Dhamma topic so that I can fully understand the teaching?”

The Lord Buddha answered, “Listen attentively then. Some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who habitually take another being’s life and are cruel. Their hands are tainted with blood. They are pre-occupied with killing and have no compassion for other living beings. When they die, they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm as a result of having killed other beings. Should they be saved from these places as a result of their past merit and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will have a short lifespan. Behold, young man, the conduct which causes a short life-span is the habitual taking of another being’s life, cruelty, hands tainted with blood, and no compassion for other living beings.

#### **In Regards to Abstention from Killing.**

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who abstain completely from killing; who put down any criminal tendency; who put down weapons; who are ashamed of wickedness; who not only have compassion for other living beings but also help them, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will enjoy a long life-span. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to a long life-span is the abstention from killing; the putting down of any criminal tendency; the putting down of weapons, being ashamed of wickedness, having compassion for other living beings and helping them.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who habitually harm other beings with their palms or a clump of dirt or a piece of wood or a weapon, when they die, they are bound for the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will be sickly. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to a frail health is the harming of other beings with the palm or a clump of dirt or a piece of wood, or a weapon.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who habitually abstain from harming other beings with their palms or a clump of dirt or a piece of wood or a weapon, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will have few illnesses. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to few illnesses is the habitual abstention from harming other beings with the palm or a clump of dirt or a piece of wood, or a weapon.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who are quick to anger; filled with vengefulness; annoyed, angry, vengeful, malicious at the slightest criticism; who show their anger, their maliciousness, and their resentment, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will have a poor complexion. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to a poor complexion is being quick to anger; being filled with vengefulness; being annoyed, angry, vengeful, malicious at the slightest criticism; showing their anger, their maliciousness, and their resentment.

### **Being Slow to Anger**

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who are slow to anger; not filled with vengefulness; not being annoyed, angry, vengeful, malicious even when harshly criticized; not showing any anger, maliciousness, or resentment, when they die they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will be admired by others. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to admirability is being slow to anger; not being filled with vengefulness; not being annoyed, angry, malicious even when harshly criticized; not showing any anger, maliciousness, or resentment.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who harbor jealousy; are jealous and malicious; are envious when others receive gain and fame, respect, homage, and veneration, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will have a low social status. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to a low social status is harboring jealousy; being jealous and malicious; being envious when others receive gain and fame, respect, homage, and veneration.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who do not harbor jealousy; are not jealous and malicious; are not envious when others receive gain and fame, respect, homage, and veneration, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will have a very high social status. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to a very high social status is not harboring jealousy; not being jealous and malicious; not being envious when others receive gain and fame, respect, homage, and veneration.

### **Giving Food, etc., as Alms**

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who do not give food, water, robes, means of transportation, flowers, scented items, skin treatments, beds, shelters, lanterns to Buddhist monks or ascetics, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will be poor. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to poverty is not giving food, water, robes, means of transportation, flowers, scented items, skin treatments, beds, shelters, light sources to Buddhist monks or ascetics.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who give food, water, robes, means of transportation, flowers, scented items, skin treatments, beds, shelters, lanterns to Buddhist monks or ascetics, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will be wealthy. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to material wealth is the giving of food, water, robes, means of transportation, flowers, scented items, skin treatments, beds, shelters, light sources to Buddhist monks or ascetics.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who are uncouth, arrogant; who do not pay respect to individuals deserving to be paid respect; who do not get up to welcome others; who do not offer a cushioned seat to individuals deserving of a cushioned seat; who do not make way for individuals deserving to be yielded to; who do not offer articles of worship to individuals deserving of articles of worship; who do not esteem individuals deserving to be esteemed; who do not respect individuals deserving to be respected; who do not worship individuals deserving to be worshipped, when they die they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will be low-born. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to being low-born is being uncouth and arrogant; not paying respect to

individuals deserving to be paid respect; not getting up to welcome others; not offering a cushioned seat to individuals deserving to be offered a cushioned seat; not making way to individuals deserving to be yielded to; not offering articles of worship to individuals deserving to be offered articles of worship; not esteeming individuals deserving to be esteemed; not respecting individuals deserving to be respected; not worshipping individuals deserving to be worshipped.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who are not uncouth and arrogant; who pay respect to individuals deserving to be paid respect; who get up to welcome others; who offer a cushioned seat to individuals deserving to be offered a cushioned seat; who give way to individuals deserving to be yielded to; who offer articles of worship to individuals deserving to be offered articles of worship; who esteem individuals deserving to be esteemed; who respect individuals deserving to be respected; who worship individuals deserving to be worshipped, when they die they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will be high-born. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to being high-born is not being crude and arrogant; paying respect to individuals deserving to be paid respect; getting up to welcome others; offering a cushioned seat to individuals deserving to be offered a cushioned seat; making way to individuals deserving to be yielded to; offering articles of worship to individuals deserving to be offered articles of worship; esteeming individuals deserving to be esteemed; respecting individuals deserving to be respected; worshipping individuals deserving to be worshipped.

### **The Lack of Thirst for True Knowledge**

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who do not approach the Buddhist monks or ascetics and ask them about what is wholesome, what is unwholesome, what is harmful, what is harmless, what should be consumed, what should not be consumed, what action when carried out does not nurture and support but leads to everlasting suffering, what action when carried out nurtures and supports and leads to everlasting happiness, when they die, they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the States of Suffering, in the Hell Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will have a low intelligence. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to a low intelligence is not approaching the Buddhist monks or ascetics and asking them about what is wholesome, what is unwholesome, what is harmful, what is harmless, what should be consumed, what should not be consumed, what action when carried out does not nurture and support but leads to everlasting suffering, what action when carried out nurtures and supports and leads to everlasting happiness.

Behold, young man, some individuals in this world, be they women or men, who approach the Buddhist monks or ascetics and ask them about what is wholesome, what is unwholesome, what is harmful, what is harmless, what should be consumed, what should not be consumed, what action when carried out does not nurture and support but leads to everlasting suffering, what action when carried out nurtures and supports and leads to everlasting happiness, when they die, they are destined for the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Should they be prevented from being reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm, and are reborn anywhere in the Human Realm at a later date, they will have a high intelligence. Behold, young man, the conduct which leads to a high intelligence is approaching the Buddhist monks or ascetics and asking them about what is wholesome, what is unwholesome, what is harmful, what is harmless, what should be consumed, what should not be consumed, what action when carried out does not nurture and support but leads to everlasting suffering, what action when carried out nurtures and supports and leads to everlasting happiness.

Behold, young man, for these reasons the conduct which leads to a short lifespan will result in having a short lifespan; the conduct which leads to a long lifespan will result in having a long lifespan; the conduct which leads to a frail health will result in being sickly; the conduct which leads to few illnesses will result in having few illnesses; the conduct which leads to a poor complexion will result in having a poor complexion; the conduct which leads to being admired by others will result in admirability; the conduct which leads to a low social status will result in having a low social status; the conduct which leads to a high social status will result in having a high social status; the conduct which leads to poverty will result in being poor; the conduct which leads to wealth will result in being wealthy; the conduct which leads to being low-born will result in being low-born; the conduct which leads to being high-born will result in being high-born; the conduct which leads to a low intelligence will result in having a low intelligence; the conduct which leads to high intelligence will result in having high intelligence. Behold, young man, all beings possess their own particular Kamma; are the heirs of their Kamma; their rebirths are dictated by their Kamma; their race is determined by their Kamma; they have their Kamma as their refuge. Kamma causes beings to be crude or refined.”

After the lecture, Subha-manob Todey-yaputra said to the Lord Buddha, “Now everything is clear. Everything is now clear. The Most Exalted One teaches the truth in detail. It is like turning something upside down right side up or opening what has been closed or giving directions to someone that has lost his way or a lantern which is lit when it is dark outside so that a person with a good eyesight can see things clearly. I ask the Most Exalted One, the Dhamma, and the Sangha (more than four Buddhist monks) to be my refuge. May the Most Exalted One remember me as a lay devotee for the rest of my life starting now.”

### **8.3.2 The Law of Kamma as Described in the Maha-kamma-vibhanga Sutta**

Once, our Lord Buddha was staying at the great Veluvana Temple. It used to be a place where chipmunks were fed and was located within the city limit of Rajagarh. At the time, the Buddhist monk named Phra Smiddhi was staying in a hut in the woods. A wandering ascetic named Potali-putra, who had been walking in the area, came around to see the monk. After they exchanged their greetings, the ascetic sat down at one side.

Having been properly seated, the ascetic said to the monk, “Behold, Honorable Smiddhi, I have heard from Gautama Buddha that physical action is void, verbal action is void and only mental action is real and that meditative attainments exist where feelings are absent.

The monk replied, “Behold, elder Potali-putra, you must not talk that way, for such talk misreads the Lord Buddha’s Teachings. Such misreading is bad because the Lord Buddha has never said that physical action is void, verbal action is void and only mental action is real and that meditative attainments exist where feelings are absent.

The ascetic said, “How long have you been ordained?”

The monk replied, “Not long, only three years.”

The ascetic said, “If a newly ordained monk can be so protective of the Buddha, then what can one say indeed in front of a more senior monk? Well then when an individual performs an intentional deed through his body, his word and his thought what consequences will he receive?”

The monk replied, “He will receive suffering.”

The ascetic neither agreed nor disagreed with the monk’s reply as he took his leave of the monk.

Not long after the incident, Phra Smiddhi went to see Phra Ananda. They exchanged greetings and Phra Smiddhi sat down at one side. After he had been properly seated, he told Phra Ananda about his conversation with the wandering ascetic. Phra Ananda told him that they should go to see the Lord Buddha and to tell the Lord Buddha about it and that they should memorize what the Lord Buddha had to say about the matter.

The two monks subsequently went to see the Lord Buddha. They paid Him a deep homage before they were properly seated at one side. Afterward, Phra Ananda told the Lord Buddha about the conversation that Phra Smiddhi had with the wandering ascetic Potali-putra.

The Lord Buddha said, “Behold, Ananda, I don’t know clearly the ascetic Potali-putra’s opinion, neither can I truly know what the conversation was about? But this monk Smiddhi answered the ascetic’s question in a one-sided manner when it actually needed to be elaborated further.



Another monk named Phra Udayi said to the Lord Buddha that Phra Smiddhi's answer implied that all feelings were considered to be suffering.

The Lord Buddha then addressed Phra Ananda, "Behold, Ananda, you should appreciate the opinion of this monk Udayi, which is totally out of line. He blabbered witlessly. Behold, Ananda, first of all, when the ascetic Potali-putra asked his question, if this monk Smiddhi had answered that "Behold, elder Potali-putra, when an individual intentionally acts through his body, word, and thought and his action results in happiness, then he will receive happy consequences. If an individual intentionally acts through his body, word, and thought, and his action results in suffering, then he will receive unhappy consequences. If an individual intentionally acts through his body, word, and thought, and his action results in neither happiness nor suffering, then he will receive neither happy nor unhappy consequences. Behold, Ananda, if this monk Smiddhi should answer in this manner, then he would have done the ascetic Potali-putra justice. But the ascetics that subscribe to other religious beliefs are stupid anyway. They are not sufficiently intelligent. Who indeed can appreciate the way I know about the consequences of each particular Karma?"

Phra Ananda said, "Most Exalted One, it is time that the Most Exalted One elaborates on the consequences of each particular Karma so that we monks can hear them and memorize them.

The Lord Buddha said, "Behold, Ananda, listen and listen carefully then. I will explain about the four types of individuals that exist in the world.

1. Some individuals in this world habitually take another being's life, habitually take what does not belong to them, habitually commit sexual misconduct, habitually lie, habitually use divisive speech, habitually use offensive language, and habitually talk nonsense. They are filled with ignorance and ill-will. They have Wrong View. When they die, they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm.
2. Some individuals in this world habitually take another being's life, habitually take what does not belong to them, habitually commit sexual misconduct, habitually lie, habitually use divisive speech, habitually use offensive language, and habitually talk nonsense. They are filled with ignorance and ill-will. They have Wrong View. When they die, they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm.
3. Some individuals in this world abstain from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, from using divisive speech, from using offensive language, and from nonsensical speech. They are not filled with ignorance and ill-will. They have Right View. When they die, they will be reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm.

4. Some individuals in this world abstain from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, from using divisive speech, from using offensive language, and from nonsensical speech. They are not filled with ignorance and ill-will. They have Right View. When they die, they will be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, in the Places of Suffering, in the Hell Realm.

Behold, Ananda, some monks or ascetics in this world use persistence to burn up defilements. They are determined, they are persistent, they are not careless, and they have right mindfulness. When they have achieved meditative attainments, they can penetrate when an individual kills, steals, is engaged in sexual misconduct, uses divisive speech, uses offensive language, talks nonsense, is filled with ignorance, harbors ill-will, has Wrong View, after he dies, he is reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. They can see these things with their Celestial Eye which is far superior to the human eye. And they say bad Kamma exists, retribution for dishonesty exists, etc. They say that I've seen this person and that person who habitually takes away another being's life, etc., has Wrong View, after he dies, he is reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. So they conclude that whoever takes away another being's life, etc., has Wrong View will after he dies be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. Since these are what they perceive with their Celestial Eye, they conclude that what they know is correct and anything outside of what they know is wrong. The monk or ascetic will talk about what he can know and what he can see for himself. He knows and sees according to his particular level of meditative attainments. He believes that only what he can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not.

Behold, Ananda, some monks or ascetics in this world use persistence to burn up defilements. They are determined, they are persistent, they are not careless, and they have right mindfulness. When they have achieved meditative attainments, they can penetrate when an individual kills, steals, etc., has Wrong View, after he dies, he is reborn in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. They can see these things with their Celestial Eye which is far superior to the human eye. So they say that there is no such thing as bad Kamma; there is no retribution for dishonesty, for they have seen that this person who kills, etc., has Wrong View spends his hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. So they make a generalization that any person who kills, etc., has Wrong View will spend his hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Since these are what they perceive with their Celestial Eye, they conclude that what they know is correct and anything outside of what they know is wrong. The monk or ascetic will talk about what he can know and what he can see for himself. He knows and sees according to his particular level of meditative attainments. He believes that only what he can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not.

Behold, Ananda, some monks or ascetics in this world use persistence to burn up defilements. They are determined, they are persistent, they are not careless, and they have right mindfulness. When they have achieved meditative attainments, they can penetrate

when an individual abstains completely from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, from divisive speech, from offensive language, from nonsensical speech, is not filled with ignorance, harbors no ill-will, has Right View, when he dies, he spends his hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. They can see these things with their Celestial Eye which is far superior to the human eye. So they say that good Kamma exists and so do the good consequences of honesty. They say that they have seen this person who completely abstains from killing, etc., has Right View spends his hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. So they make a generalization that any person who completely abstains from killing, etc., has Right View will spend his hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Since these are what they perceive with their Celestial Eye, they conclude that what they know is correct and anything outside of what they know is wrong. The monk or ascetic will talk about what he can know and what he can see for himself. He knows and sees according to his particular level of meditative attainments. He believes that only what he can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not.

Behold, Ananda, some monks or ascetics in this world use persistence to burn up defilements. They are determined, they are persistent, they are not careless, and they have right mindfulness. When they have achieved meditative attainments, they can penetrate when an individual completely abstains from killing, etc., has Right View, when he dies, he spends his hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the States of Suffering, the Hell Realm. They can see these things with their Celestial Eye which is far superior to the human eye. So they say that there is no such thing as good Kamma, there is no such thing as the good consequences of honesty. They say that they have seen this person who completely abstains from killing, etc., has Right View spends his hereafter in the States of Loss of Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the States of Suffering, the Hell Realm. So they conclude that any individual who abstains completely from killing, etc., has Right View spends his hereafter in the States of Loss of Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the States of Suffering, the Hell Realm. Since these are what they perceive with their Celestial Eye, they conclude that what they know is correct and anything outside of what they know is wrong. The monk or ascetic will talk about what he can know and what he can see for himself. He knows and sees according to his particular level of meditative attainments. He believes that only what he can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not.

Behold, Ananda, of these four categories of monks or ascetics, I approve of the ones that say that bad Kamma exists and the ill consequences of dishonesty exist. They say these things because they have seen certain individuals who kill, etc., have Wrong View, spend their hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. However, I disapprove when they say that every individual who kills, etc., has Wrong View will spend his hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. They know and see according to their particular level of meditative attainments and they believe that only what they can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not. This I also disapprove because my knowledge of the consequences of each particular Kamma says differently.

Behold, Ananda, of these four categories of monks or ascetics, I disapprove of the ones who say that bad Karma does not exist and the ill consequences of dishonesty do not exist. But I approve when they say these things because they have seen certain individuals who kill, etc., have Wrong View, spend their hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. I disapprove when they say that everyone who kills, etc., has Wrong View will spend his hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. They know and see according to their particular level of meditative attainments and they believe that only what they can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not. This I also disapprove because my knowledge of the consequences of each particular Karma says differently.

Behold, Ananda, of these four categories of monks or ascetics, I approve of the ones who say good Karma exists, the good consequences of honesty exist. They say these things because they have seen certain individuals who abstain completely from killing, etc., have Right View spend their hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. However, I disapprove when they say that everyone who completely abstains from killing, etc., have Right View will spend their hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. They know and see according to their particular level of meditative attainments and they believe that only what they can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not. This I also disapprove because my knowledge of the consequences of each particular Karma says differently.

Behold, Ananda, of these four categories of monks or ascetics, I disapprove of the ones who say good Karma does not exist, the good consequences of honesty do not exist. But I approve when they say these things because they have seen certain individuals who completely abstain from killing, etc., have Right View spend their hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. I disapprove when they say that everyone who completely abstains from killing, etc., has Right View will spend his hereafter in the States of Loss of Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. They know and see according to their particular level of meditative attainments and they believe that only what they can witness is true knowledge, anything else is not. This I also disapprove because my knowledge of the consequences of each particular Karma says differently.

Behold, Ananda, of the four types of individuals, the ones who habitually take another being's life, etc., have Wrong View spend their hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. It happens that way because these individuals had accumulated a great number of evil deeds or they had subscribed to Wrong View in their past existences. As a result, they spend the hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. Individuals in this world who habitually take another being's life, etc., have Wrong View will most certainly reap the ill consequences of their evil deeds in this or the next or the following existences.

Behold, Ananda, of the four types of individuals, the ones who habitually take another being's life, etc., have Wrong View spend their hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. It happens that way because they had accumulated a great number of

good deeds or they had subscribed to Right View in their past existences. As a result, they spend the hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Individuals in this world who habitually take another being's life, etc., have Wrong View will most certainly reap the ill consequences of their evil deeds in this or the next or the following existences.

Behold, Ananda, of the four types of individuals, the ones who completely abstain from killing, etc., have Right View spend their hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. It happens that way because they had accumulated a great number of good deeds or they had subscribed to Right View in their past existences. As a result, they spend the hereafter in the States of Happiness, the Celestial Realm. Individuals in this world who completely abstain from killing, etc., have Right View will most certainly reap the consequences of their good deeds in this or the next or the following existences.

Behold, Ananda, of the four types of individuals, the ones who completely abstain from killing, etc., have Right view spend their hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, the Places of Suffering, the Hell Realm. It happens that way because they had accumulated a great number of evil deeds or they had subscribed to the Wrong View in their past existences. As a result, they spend the hereafter in the States of Loss and Woe, in the States of Unhappiness, the States of Suffering, the Hell Realm. Individuals in this world who completely abstain from killing, etc., have Right View will most certainly reap the consequences of their good deeds in this or the next or the following existences.

Behold, Ananda, for these reasons, there are bad deeds which appear to give immediate ill consequences, there are bad deeds which appear to give immediate good consequences, there are good deeds which appear to give immediate good consequences, there are good deeds which appear to give immediate bad consequences. Thus ended the Lord Buddha's sermon on the subject.

### **8.3.3 The Law of Kamma as Described in the Lonaka Sutta**

Behold, monks, when one says that whatever Kamma an individual performs, he will reap that very Kamma, then there is no use in practicing chastity, there is no way to end suffering altogether. However, when one says that whatever Kamma an individual performs in order to gain a particular outcome, he will reap the consequences of that very Kamma, then there are reasons for practicing chastity, there is a way to end suffering altogether.

Monks, a small amount of evil which an individual performs will lead him to be reborn in the Hell Realm. Yet, the same small amount of evil which another individual performs will become *Ditthi-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma* (the consequences are reaped in the present existence) and will not have much effect in the next existence.

What individuals perform a small amount of evil and end up being reborn in the Hell Realm? Some individuals in this world do not discipline their bodies. They lack the Precepts. They do not discipline their minds. They lack wisdom. They have few virtues. They are inconsiderate. They are uncouth. They are narrow-minded. They are quick to misery. When such individuals perform a small amount of evil, it will lead him to be reborn in the Hell Realm.

What individuals perform the same small amount of evil and it becomes Ditthi-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma and will not have much effect in the next existence? Some individuals in this world discipline their bodies. They observe the Precepts. They discipline their minds. They possess wisdom. They are virtuous. They are broad-minded. They are noble-minded. They are meritorious. They have a low level of defilements. When such individuals perform a small amount of evil, it will become Ditthi-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma and will not have much effect in the next existence.

Behold, monks, when a person adds a lump of salt to a small cup of water. Will the water in the small cup now become unpalatable because of the lump of salt added to it?

The monks answered, “It will be so, Most Exalted One.”

The Lord Buddha asked, “Why is that?”

The monks answered, “Because there is only a small amount of water when compared to the amount of salt added to it.”

The Lord Buddha said, “Now suppose the same lump of salt is added to the Ganges, will the added salt turn the water unpalatable?”

The monks answered, “It won’t, Most Exalted One.”

The Lord Buddha asked, “And why not?”

The monks answered, “Because there is now a large amount of water when compared to the amount of salt added to it.”

The Lord Buddha said, “It is in the same manner that when some individuals perform a small amount of evil, it can lead them to be reborn in the Hell Realm. Yet, when other individuals do it, it becomes Ditthi-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma and will not have much effect in the next existence.

Monks, some individuals feel attachment to half-a-kahapana<sup>1</sup>, one kahapana, 100 kahapanas but other individuals do not.

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<sup>1</sup> Units of currency

What individuals feel attachment to half-a-kahapana, one kahapana, 100 kahapanas? Individuals who are poor, have few material possessions, have very little wealth will feel attachment to half-a-kahapana, one kahapana, 100 kahapanas.

What individuals do not feel attachment to a small amount of money? Individuals, who are wealthy, who have a lot of money, who have a great deal of material possessions, will not feel attachment to such small amounts of money.

It is in the same manner that when some individuals perform a small amount of evil, it can lead them to be reborn in the Hell Realm. Yet, when other individuals do it, it becomes Ditthi-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma and will not have much effect in the next existence.

Monks, what individuals can kill a stolen sheep, tie it up, roast it, or do anything else with it? Some individuals in this world are poor, have few material passions, possess very little wealth can kill a stolen sheep, tie it up, roast it, or do anything else with it.

What kind of individuals will not do such things? Some individuals in this world are wealthy, have a lot of money, have a great deal of material possessions will not do such things. Others may beg them for a sheep or beg them for money so that they can buy a sheep with it. In the same manner, when an individual performs a small amount of evil, it can lead him to be reborn in the Hell Realm. Yet, when another individual does it, it becomes Ditthi-dhamma-veda-niya-kamma and will not have much effect in the next existence.

Monks, when one says that whatever Kamma an individual performs, he will reap that very Kamma, then there is no use in practicing chastity, there is no way to end suffering altogether. When one says that whatever Kamma an individual performs in order to gain a particular outcome, he will reap the consequences of that very Kamma, then there are reasons for practicing chastity, there is a way to end suffering altogether.

## **8.4 Summary of the Main Points and Practices**

The main points concerning the Law of Kamma are as follows:

- 1) As long as defilements still remain, one must continue to undergo the round of rebirth.
- 2) Whatever one is reborn as, be it a human being, an animal, etc., know that there is a vast number of past good and bad deeds that are lining up to send their consequences. Some individuals meet with hardship in life and want to escape by committing suicide without realizing how much more suffering they will be facing in the hereafter once they die. Therefore, they should try to solve their problems according to the Threefold Training. They must try and do the best they can to make sure that they will not meet with the same hardship in the next existence.

- 3) Being reborn in the States of Loss and Woe is the real danger of the round of rebirth. A rebirth as a human being is extremely rare and difficult. The longer it takes to be reborn as a human being, the further one will be from Emancipation and the higher the risk of performing more and more Kamma with its endless consequences.
- 4) How must we live to make sure that we will spend our future existences in the States of Happiness from now until the time we can attain Nibbana and never again to be reborn in the States of Loss and Woe?
- 5) Keep to the Buddhist ideal, ‘Abandon evil. Perform good deeds. Keep the mind bright and clear.’

Summary of practices concerning Kamma which have already been performed and will be performed in the future.

- 1) Forget about all past mistakes and do not think about them again. Otherwise, they will send their ill consequences and cause us to suffer.
- 2) Abstain from all misdeeds now and forever.
- 3) Perform only good deeds and think of them often. Merit occurs before, during, and after the merit-making activity. Thinking about our good deeds will cause them to send their good consequences and cause us to be happy.
- 4) Perform good deeds regularly, everyday, every week. Habitual performance of good deeds is the source of merit and wholesomeness. Merit in turn brings with it happiness and is behind every success in life, in education, in business and work.
- 5) Practice meditation regularly and daily to refine the mind. A clear and bright mind encourages us to perform more and more good deeds.

## **Exercises**

After the student finishes studying Chapter 8, complete the test for Chapter 8 and do the exercise given in 8.1 and all the other assignments.